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BEAC IS WHAT STATES MAKE OF IT

Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic

Council from a constructivist viewpoint

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NATALIA ZAVADSKAIA: BEAC Is What States Make of It. Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council from a Constructivist Viewpoint

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This thesis will inquire into the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) from a constructivist viewpoint. The title is inspired by Alexander Wendt's famous phrasing "Anarchy is what states make of it" and is reframed to "the Barents cooperation is what states make of it".

The aim is to show how identities and common norms embedded in the 'social culture' of the Barents cooperation affect actors' interests and their behavior. The point of departure is that self-image and identity will shape norms and states' interests, based on a notion that they operate in a social context of international relations. In my thesis, I will study how states view their own role in this cooperation, how they perceive each other and the region and which norms are brought to the fore. I will also try to find out which norms are shared and how they are internalized. The hypothesis is that there is a certain degree of identification by members of the Barents cooperation with the region and that it plays a significant role in their self-image. There should also exist some shared norms and values, which members of the group consider legitimate and are willing to project in cooperation with their counterparts.

The theoretical framework of the current study is based on constructivism in IR, as presented mainly by Onuf and Wendt, as well as regime studies. Constructivism plays a part in explaining the role of identity and norms in the Barents cooperation; the theory of international regimes is used to put cooperation in its present context and to explain for the process of learning, knowledge sharing and norms internalization.

The methodological basis of the study is the Qualitative Content Analysis and the Theory of Speech Acts. Applying these methods I will analyze BEAC documents, as well as speeches of official representatives of Norway, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Denmark and the EU. Availability of speeches delivered by politicians in relation to the involvement of their countries in the Barents cooperation at different times will allow making a comparison of how interests and identities of actors have changed for 20 years of cooperation.

The thesis does not intend to cover the actual implementation of different Barents policies and give a positivist truth on whether this cooperation is effective or not, but it rather makes an attempt to look at how ideas matter in international politics and thus to support the theory of constructivism in IR by applying it to a particular example of international relations – cooperation in the BEAC.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the research problem

The growing attention to Arctic natural resources, opening up of new shipping routes, which bring about new trade and industrial projects, the rising appreciation of the region's vulnerability to climate change bring the Barents region and the Arctic high on the political agenda in the current international relations. Taking into consideration the interdependent character of environmental, social and economic problems in the region, more political determination to cooperate within particular organizational structures is shown. One of these structures is the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.

More than 20 years have passed since representatives of governments of the Nordic states, Russia and the EU met in Kirkenes to launch the Barents cooperation under the Kirkenes declaration. In 2013, Barents leaders met again in the same Norwegian northern town to draw a line under two decades of manifold and multilayer cooperation and to sign a new declaration known as "Kirkenes Declaration 2.0". In this regard, it seems to be interesting to look at how interests of states have changed and how cooperation itself has advanced.

A trigger to make this inquiry from a constructivist perspective has been the recent Agreement on Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean signed between Norway and Russia in September 2010 and presented at the 20th Anniversary of Barents Summit as one of the major achievements of the Barents cooperation. According to Jens Stoltenberg, the then Prime Minister of Norway and the chair of the BEAC in 2011-2013, "the spirit of cooperation and the mutual trust" which has been built through the Barents cooperation "contributed to this historic achievement" (Stoltenberg 2013).

In mass media, especially in the Russian news, as well as in some scientific circles there are certain doubts whether this treaty, which delaminates the disputable offshore area in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean, can be considered profitable for Russia. It is more often presented as a serious faux pas of the Russian government and a generous Moscow's "gift" to Oslo (see e.g. Fomenko 2013, Nilsen 2013, Strelkovskaya 2013). From a traditional rationalist stand, this delimitation deal is neither a relative nor an absolute gain for the Russian Federation. Neo-realists will point to the political weakness and the defeat of Russia in this game where strategic interests have been at stake, neo-liberals would underline economic long-run loss of the country since the Norwegian sector of the formerly disputable area is said to hold 1.9 billion barrels of oil. Following the logic of rationalists, Russia as one of the biggest and most powerful country in the region, will not be interested in giving up sovereignty and cooperating on management of resources with other states.

Yet, this border delimitation deal can serve as a confirmation of a growing Russian willingness to make compromises in neighborhood relations and abandoning traditional hardline geopolitical interests in exchange for cooperation potential (Staalesen 2012, 11). In this regard, it seems to me that interpretative approach in IR, namely constructivism, suits better to explain this particular phenomenon as well as how interests of BEAC members have changed for more than 20 years of cooperation and what lies behind this change.

While rationalists see states as utility-maximizers and interests as given and exogenous to interaction, constructivists describe states as role-players and claim that interests are not static or given, that they can be changed through interaction (Ruggie 1998, 14). Thus, social norms, identities and knowledge being part of communication can influence interests' formation. Hasenclever et al. (1997, 140-141) point out that both the meaning of power and perception of actors' interests rely upon the development of the actors' social knowledge, which they acquire through intersubjective communication. Although constructivists do not deny the fact that norms may be endogenous to interests, they argue that the reverse can also be true: interests can be endogenous to norms, when norms that are relevant for international and transnational relations have been internalized (Keohane 2009, 8).

In my thesis, I will make an inquiry in how identity and social norms influence international relations as exemplified by cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. Following the main premise of constructivism about social construction of world politics, cooperation here is seen not as a positivist reality but rather as a socially constructed culture.

The term "social culture" is borrowed from Wendt's "Social theory of International Politics" (Wendt 1999). According to Wendt and Weber, the structure of international relations becomes "social" when actors take each other "into account" in choosing their actions (as cited in Wendt, 1999, 249). Wendt continues by arguing that this process is based on actors' ideas on the nature and role of the Self and the Other. Some ideas are shared, some are private. The shared ideas make up the "social culture" (ibid.). Social culture is the main premise of my thesis. Applying this to the Barents cooperation I will try to show that there are shared ideas, which are accepted voluntarily as legitimate by members of the group and thus influence their interests and choices of foreign policy actions.

My thesis could be considered as a case study with the aim to strengthen the theory of constructivism by applying it to a particular niche of international relations – Barents cooperation. The added value of the thesis is thought to be an attempt to show how a particular set of methods could be used to prove the main assumptions of the theory. In my case, it means demonstrating how

ideals and ideas matter in international relations by doing a qualitative analysis of the content of written and spoken texts and interpreting them from a constructivist stand.

1.2. Thesis aim and research questions

The **aim** of this thesis is to analyze what role identity and norms play in promoting or maintaining the Barents cooperation at the international level. The main **research question** could be formulated as follows:

What role do identity and norms play in interests' formation of Barents states and how does this affect the Barents cooperation?

The starting point is a constructivist assumption that the structure of the international system is a social phenomenon rather than a material one. According to Wendt (1999, 20), the character of international life is determined by the beliefs and expectations that states have about each other and these are constructed largely by social rather than material structures. In other words, the world is what we think about it. The knowledge actors carry in their heads and project in their international encounters shapes their behavior and expectations (Haas 1990, 7).

Identities, interests and norms are examined here as being social constructs affected by shared ideas and embedded in a larger social culture of the cooperation within the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. Having this in mind, I will look at how states view themselves, relate to others and the region, and how this affects states' interests and the Barents cooperation as a whole.

The title of the thesis is inspired by the Wendt's famous phrasing "Anarchy is what states make of it" (Wendt 1992) and is reframed here to "the Barents cooperation is what states make of it". Wendt applies social culture to the anarchy in international relations and classifies it into three different types: Hobbesian characterized by enmity and force, Lockean which deals with rivalry and self-interest and Kantian associated with friendship and norms (Wendt 1999, 246-312). Unlike Wendt's application of cultures, my analysis will not be limited exclusively to security related issues but will be extended to cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council as a whole. With evidently no Hobbesian traits in the Barents cooperation, it will be interesting to look at two other types of cultures – Lockean and Kantian – and find out which one predominates in the Barents.

It is also necessary to follow up how and to what extent norms are internalized within the Barents cooperation. While the *how* component implies mechanisms of norms' internalization, *to what extent* means the degree of their internalization. As for the former, I will resort to Goodman and Jinks (2008, 726) persuasion and acculturation mechanisms which are also used by Robert Keohane

in his reasoning about social norms in world politics (Keohane 2009)¹. As for the degree of norms socialization, I will resort to Alexander Wendt (1999), Nicholas Onuf (1997) and Robert Keohane (2009). While Wendt (1999, 250) distinguishes between three degrees of norms internalization within each culture which could be briefly described as force, self-interest and legitimacy, Keohane argues that norms may serve as road maps, focal points and institutions, and Onuf distinguishes between instruction, directive and commissive rules. In my research, I will try to place the Barents cooperation at a relevant degree according to how norms are internalized among actors.

To sum it up, the following minor questions will guide my study and help in answering the main research question mentioned above:

- a) What characterizes BEAC members in terms of their perception of themselves, i.e. their role in the region, and their view of the others?*
- b) What characterizes BEAC members as relates to their perception of cooperation in the Barents? Which norms are brought to the fore and which are neglected?*
- c) What is the communicative language of speeches and what can be derived from it?*
- e) Through which mechanisms and to what extent are social norms internalized?*
- g) What type and degree of social culture the Barents cooperation could be described as?*

Applying the theoretical framework of constructivism in my thesis, I will first try to define what type of culture the Barents cooperation is. To do so, I will explore how states identify themselves in the region and how they relate to others and to the region. I will use the qualitative content analysis to trace the communicative language of politicians' speeches and to find common and different views of Self, Other and the region which can be claimed to constitute a culture in the Barents cooperation.

In analyzing speeches of Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of Barents states, I will try to categorize them into a certain type of speech acts and make a conclusion on what kind of rules – instructions, imperatives or commitments – prevail in the Barents cooperation. This could tell *how* norms are internalized in the Barents: through acculturation or persuasion. Resting upon these findings, I will then make an assumption on what degree of culture the Barents cooperation is according to Wendt and what role identities and norms play in influencing interests of the BEAC members.

One of the main assumptions of constructivism is that interests do not exist independently from how actors perceive reality and how they view their own role and the role of the Other in international relations. In other words, interests are influenced by identities – role-specific understandings and expectations about the Self and the Other.

¹ As for R. Keohane, although his works are mainly associated with neoliberalism, he has also made notable contributions to the knowledge-based research agendas (Hasenclever et al. 1997, 6).

The correlation between norms and identities is more subtle and thus more difficult to explain. According to Wendt (1999, 10), the social construction of identity means that norms are embedded in the system composed of states. These embedded norms guide the interaction of states (ibid.). Norms influence the images of states depending on how deep the culture is embedded within the relations. Social context of cooperation changes an actors' identity and the way they view others in this cooperation by forming a sense of unity or a "we" (idem, 250). Following this logic, socialization makes states redefine their identities and interests, since they are not static. Hence, the deeper norms are internalized the more they play a part in affecting states' identities and interests.

1.3. Research limits

Taking into consideration that the Barents Euro-Arctic Council functions at two layers – international and regional – it is impossible to make a solid and comprehensive research of all of them within the scope of this thesis. I have decided to concentrate on intergovernmental cooperation taking into consideration that states are the main actors in international relations from a constructivist perspective. In my research, I will not cover the role of other actors such as NGOs or indigenous peoples although aware that they could make a difference.

The thesis does not intend to cover the actual implementation of different Barents policies and give a positivist truth on whether this cooperation is effective or not, but it rather makes an attempt to look at how ideas matter in international politics. The study is not focused on cooperation in particular spheres but on the 'culture' of cooperation as influenced by identities and norms.

The research will be mainly done through written and spoken texts' analysis, thus leaving beyond the scope the analysis of the BEAC bureaucratic structures (working groups and secretariats). The thesis will be focused on the communicative language of state policy-makers, how this language can be characterized and what assumptions can be made. The point of departure is that language plays an important role in 'making the reality' and shaping the relations between states.

1.4. Structure of the study

This thesis is divided into six main chapters. The first one introduces the reader into the topic and discusses the research aim and questions. The second one is theoretical and deals with different approaches to regime studies with particular emphasis on the application of constructivist theory in studying international institutions. In this chapter, I will also explain how the above mentioned theoretical framework is applied to cooperation within the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. The third chapter is devoted to methods used in the study – qualitative analysis of texts and the theory of speech acts – and how they are applied to the analysis of the Barents cooperation.

The fourth and the fifth chapters are an empirical analysis itself. In the fourth chapter, I will study Barents Euro-Arctic Council as an international institution from a formal institutional analysis borrowed from Barkin (2006) based on the Kirkenes Declarations 1993, 2003 and 2013 and the Terms of Reference for the BEAC. The research is made to define the role and the place of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in international relations. The fifth chapter is the qualitative analysis of speeches of representatives of Norway, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Denmark as well as the EU. This choice is explained by the importance, which cognitivists attach to language and communication. The availability of texts of speeches delivered by the relevant political figures at different times gives possibility to make a comparative analysis and to trace how interests of the Barents actors have changed and what lies behind this change. The sixth chapter sums up all the data gained through the research and connects it with the theoretical points of departure.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH ORIENTATION

This chapter will describe major theoretical approaches in IR, which, to my mind, are relevant in framing the Barents cooperation. First of all, it seems logical to resort to regime studies in IR. The thesis will not primarily concern the effectiveness or legitimacy of regimes, though aware that these issues can be relevant in the Barents cooperation. Although cooperation in the Barents region cannot be regarded as an international regime, due to at least two-layer cooperation structure and a wide range of issues addressed by its members², I regard it logical and appropriate to use the background on regime theories, more specifically a reflectivist approach to regime studies, to put cooperation in its present context and to explain for the process of learning, knowledge sharing and norms internalization within the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. Constructivism plays a part in explaining the role of identity and norms in the Barents cooperation.

2.1. Regimes in International Relations

International regimes have been a major focus of research in IR since 1980s (Hasenclever et al. 1997, 3) and in the study of international institutions a regime analysis remains a predominant approach (Barkin 2006, 23). Although there are some ambiguities and disagreements between various scholars on the nature of an international regime and its correlation with an international organization, the consensus definition has become the one introduced by Stephan Krasner. Thus, according to Krasner (1983, 2), a regime is:

implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations.

Principles are beliefs about causation and how a social process works. Norms are standards of behavior that are ideational. Rules are specific guidelines, usually found in the form of a covenant or treaty, of behavior that conform to the norms. Decision-making procedures are the dispute resolution mechanisms of a regime. Should one or more actors violate the rules, a decision is made about the proper procedure for the other actors that are part of the regime to take in regard to the incident(s) in question (Stanton 2002, 20).

The most fundamental difference between regimes and organizations – both of which can be seen as representing a type of international institution (Keohane 1989, 3) – lies in the fact that regimes, being no more than sets of principles, norms, rules, and procedures accepted by states, do not possess the capacity to act, whereas organizations can respond to events (Keohane 1988, 384). Secondly, the sphere of activity of an international regime needs to be restricted to a particular issue-area of international relations.

² Regime as described by Krasner (1983, 2) is always an issue-specific cooperation.

Regime studies include two major approaches: a rationalist and a reflectivist. Two major schools of thought represent the first approach: realism, which treats power relations as key variables and is referred to as a power-based approach to international regimes; and neoliberalism, which underlines self-interests of states as a focal point in cooperation and is referred to as an interest-based approach. Both of these schools see states as utility-maximizers with given interests. The difference is in the importance which they give to international institutions in international relations and the reasons for states to accede to them. Reflectivism in studying international regimes is known as a knowledge-based approach, which emphasizes knowledge dynamics, communication and identities³.

2.1.1 Power-based theories of international regimes

Power-based theories, which assume that power is the main engine of international relations and that states care more about relative gains, are least inclined to ascribe importance to international institutions. Although they do not deny the existence of regime-based cooperative structures in international relations, the need to explain successful international cooperation, which goes far beyond mere power balancing, from a traditional realist stand represents the main ‘puzzle’ for these theorists (Hasenclever A. et al. 1997, 3).

Realists argue that states are relative gain-maximizers with given interests, which are not affected by norms and rules existing in international relations. Power is the major explanation for states to engage in any kind of international institutions and it is no less central in cooperation than in conflict. According to Krasner (1991, 106), power matters because it determines who can play, who gets what and what the rules of the game will be.

Realists offer a theory of hegemonic stability, which holds that regimes are created by powerful states to ensure cooperation that is beneficial to a hegemon. Whenever the power of the hegemon begins to be equalized by other states, regimes will begin to fail and cooperation will be most difficult (Hasenclever et al. 1997, 90). In other words, a hegemon coerces other states to obey by norms, which exist within a regime. Following the logic of realists, states follow norms not because they think they are legitimate but because they are aware (and are afraid of) of the consequences for not following them.

According to neo-realists, states that operate in an anarchical world care about relative gains rather than absolute, which hampers cooperation (Hasenclever et al 1997, 116-118). They propose that

³ This division into three schools of thought within the study of regimes in this thesis is followed by the one presented by Hasenclever A., Mayer P. & Rittberger V. in their “*Theories of International Regimes*” (1997). However the authors themselves admit that this distinction is not novel. Young and Osherenko (1993, 8-20) distinguished power-based, interest-based, and knowledge-based hypotheses regarding the formation of regimes. P. Haas (1993, 174) also made use of this typology (and terminology), applying it to “regime patterns”.

states will forgo absolute gain if it is expected that another state would reap greater benefit and increase in relative capabilities from the transaction (idem, 120).

2.1.2. Interest-based theories of international regimes

While realists emphasize power considerations and how the relative position of actors will cause cooperation, and thus argue that regimes are less likely to exist and harder to maintain, neoliberals stress the self-interest as the motive for cooperation among states and their concern for absolute gains. According to neo-liberals, states are rational egoists who care about absolute gains and engage in international cooperation to reduce transaction costs, improve information flows and specify 'property rights' (Barkin 2006, 41). They do so as long as it is in their interests. Interest, is thus, the main incentive for states to accede to international organizations or international regimes. Representatives of this approach see states' interests and identities as exogenously given and thus as essentially unaffected by rule-governed practices or institutions (Hasenclever, et al. 1997, 37).

As for reducing transaction costs, states create forums for interaction, administrative structures, and sets of rules and procedures that make repeated interactions on the issue less costly (Barkin 2006, 44). Regimes are also important because they provide information to states, which facilitates cooperation (Hasenclever, et al. 1997, 32-34). Regimes are created as instruments to achieve the cooperative goal of the states regarding a certain resource (idem, 37). States agree to sacrifice some of their sovereign rights and transmit them to the international level in return for more transparency in international relations.

Nevertheless, the main 'puzzle' of neo-liberals in explaining effectiveness of international regimes, which also causes the main flow of criticism towards an interest-based approach to regime studies, is whether 'transparency' could be provided successfully enough to maintain a regime. According to neo-liberals, states operate in a world of rivalry based on self-interest not on trust and thus, everyone can possibly cheat. There is no guarantee that if a state agrees to cede some sovereign rights to the international regime, other states will do the same and on the same scale.

2.1.3. Knowledge-based theories of international regimes

Representatives of the third school of thought in regime analysis have subjected rationalist approaches to thorough criticism. First of all, they point to one of the main delusions of realists and liberals about international relations – that states are rational actors, who are atomistic in the sense that their identities, powers, and fundamental interests are prior to international society and its institutions. Secondly, according to knowledge-based theorists, rationalists are wrong in applying basically static approach to the study of international relations, which is ill-equipped to account for learning at the unit level and history at the system level (Hasenclever, et al. 1997, 5).

According to cognitivists, both neo-liberal and neo-realists theorists underestimate the role of ideas and norms in international relations. For cognitivists the principles and norms are embedded in the system and define the actors that are part of the system.

In fact, cognitivists do not reject the importance of interests in international relations, but they inquire into *how* these interests are formed and emphasize the process of change. The world of international relations is constantly transforming and so do actors' interests and identities. States acquire their identities and incorporate norms in their behavior through the process of interaction which is two-fold: interests of the states affect their choice for getting involved in international institutions, but at the same time intersubjective interaction affects their interests (Hasenclever, et al. 1997, 147). So, interests are not static or once given, they can change and this, in turn, can change the substance of cooperation.

The cognitive process is, thus, in the center of their attention and it is the main factor, which influences regime formation. Only through communication with others, states define and redefine their identities on the basis of which they then form their interests and make foreign policy decisions. Ideas, or knowledge, carry weight because interests are shaped by ideas. Ikenberry (1993) argues that after the Second World War, the world economy was greatly shaped by the idea of Keynesianism. Nye (1987) explains how common ideas about the destructive power of nuclear weapons made it possible to launch negotiations on the implementation of security regimes in the 1970s and 1980s.

2.2. Constructivism in International Relations

To start with, I would like to relate to the founder of constructivism, Nicholas Onuf (1998, 58), who in his concise exposition of constructivism "Constructivism. A User's Manual" expressed the main idea of this rather new and increasingly popular in IR theory:

[...] social relations make or construct people – ourselves – into the kind of beings that we are. Conversely, we make the world what it is, [...] by doing what we do with each other and saying what we say to each other. Indeed, saying is doing: talking is undoubtedly the most important way that we go about making the world what it is.

[...] Relations among countries – international relations – constitute a world in its own right. This is a self-contained world for the simple reason that it covers the earth, but it is still nothing more than a world of our making.

Thus, constructivism highlights the 'social construction' of world politics and is based upon the post-positivist approach to understanding and knowing.

Since the development of this theoretical approach to understanding international relations, constructivists have divided into two mainstreams. Weak constructivism holds that liberal and realist theories are not completely wrong, that they need to be accompanied by the theories of

learning. Weak constructivists do not deny the existence of state interests, they just argue that interests do change and thus center their analysis on *how* interests are formed. Strong constructivism rejects the arguments of both liberalism and realism and holds that only the explanation of the origin and dynamic of societal actors' self-understanding can explain cooperation and the role of regimes in international interaction (Hasenclever et al. 1997, 137).

Alexander Wendt has contributed a lot into the theory and more precisely into trying to compromise between neo-liberals and radical constructivists. He holds "a philosophically principled middle way" in between conventional IR scholarship and postmodernism (Wendt 1999, 2).

As explained by Wendt in his "Social Theory of International Politics" (1999, 1) constructivism⁴ has two basic tenets:

- (1) structures of human associations are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and
- (2) identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature.

The social construction of identity means that norms and ideals of state behavior are embedded in the system, which is primarily composed of states. These embedded ideals guide and direct the interaction of states. International relations are not readily visible to human senses, but according to constructivism these relations result from a distribution of ideas. Implicit in this delineation is the assumption that states have 'human' traits. Indeed, scholars and state leaders often speak of the national 'interests', 'needs', etc. (Wendt 1999, 10).

The main aim of constructivism is to "discover identities and their associated reproductive social practices, and then offer an account of how those identities imply certain actions" (Hopf, 1998, 172). Identities are "relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self" (Wendt, 1992, 397). Interests are endogenous to identities, in other words, identities make up interests.

Actors do not have a 'portfolio' of interests that they carry around independent of social context; instead, they define their interests in the process of defining situation (ibid.).

Constructivists underline the importance of intersubjectively shared meanings, which help states develop their understanding of themselves and others. According to Hopf (1998, 173), a meaningful action can only occur within the intersubjective social context, where actors and structures are mutually constituted.

The key premise of idealist social theory (set against materialism which privileges material forces), is that people act towards objects, including each other, on the basis of the meanings those objects

⁴ A term first used in IR scholarship by Nicholas Onuf (1989).

have for them (Blumer, 1969, 2). According to constructivism, the same logic could be applied to international relations. As shown by Wendt in his “Social Theory of International Politics” (1999, 246-312), all states view each other either as enemies, rivals, or friends. However, they treat these roles not as properties of the agents but rather properties of the social structure. The result is that actors ground their decisions not on what they know about each other, but on what they know about each other’s role “enabling them to predict each other’s behavior without knowing each other’s “minds” (Wendt 1999, 264). For instance, during the Cold War the Soviet Union and the USA reacted towards each other stemming from their knowledge about the structure of international relations, which they viewed in terms of what could be described in Wendt’s words as Hobbesian anarchy. Subsequently, they attached the roles of enemies to the Self and the Other and acted respectively. Following Wendt, they needed the Other to play the role of enemy, i.e. to constitute their own identities (idem, 273),

In a culture of friendship states follow the same logic but with different outcomes. Stemming from the knowledge of peaceful intentions of the Other, they take on the role of a friend and are determined to settle all disputes peacefully and in cooperation. Ideally, the Self identifies itself with the Other, and international interests become part of national interests. “The cognitive boundaries of the Self are extended to include the Other; Self and Other form a single “cognitive region” which Wendt calls “collective identity” (idem, 305).

My assumption is that cooperation in the BEAC could be described as a culture of friendship⁵. In the current thesis, I will inquire into how BEAC members see their own role in this cooperation and how they perceive each other. The result of the analysis should be an answer to what extent we could talk about “collective identity” among the BEAC members.

I will base my research mainly on the Wendt’s moderate stand on constructivism. In doing so I accept the neo-liberal assumption that member-states of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council do have

⁵ Following the logic of constructivism, the recent crisis in Ukraine and the way Russia and the West treats it could have certain outcomes for the ‘social culture’ of cooperation in the Barents region. It depends on how deep the crisis will change the perception of the Self and the Other, and whether it will significantly split BEAC members on a range of norms and values they consider legitimate. Although the referendum conducted in Crimea on March 16, 2014 did split Russia and the West at least on matters of international law and politics, it is too early to make any far-reaching arguments on how this will affect cooperation between Russia and other members of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. Thereupon, the outcomes of the recent crisis for cooperation in the BEAC is beyond the scope of the current thesis, but could be an issue for further research. Up to now, although there are announcements made by the EU, as well as Norway and other Nordic countries that they condemn Russian involvement in the recent events in Ukraine, practical cooperation at the regional level continues. For example, Minister of Foreign Affairs Borge Brende in his Statement to the Storting on March 25, 2014 said, “it [crisis in Ukraine] is not a bilateral issue between Norway and Russia”. He further stated that “it is in Norway’s interests to continue to cooperate with Russia to address challenges that can only be solved if we work together, for instance in the fields of natural resource management, environmental protection and economic development” (Brende 2014). Finnish counterparts also express willingness to continue cooperation with Russia regardless of the measures taken by the EU. Finnish President Sauli Niinistö underlined that Finland will continue to develop close political relations with Russia and that “the line of communication with Moscow must be kept as open as possible” (tpk.fi, 2014).

some ‘egoistic’ interests, which they are eager to promote and which undoubtedly influence their foreign policy decisions and their position in cooperation with other states. At the same time, I do not agree that interests are given and that states will never change them in the course of communication with other actors involved in the cooperative structure. The treaty on delimitation and cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean finally signed between Norway and Russia in 2010 after almost 40 years of disputes serves as an example. Thus, in my research I will try to prove that interests *do* change and that they are ‘socially constructed’ which means that they are dependent on identities of states which they acquire through participating in the Barents cooperation.

2.2.1. Knowledge and the process of learning

Constructivists argue that

between international structures and human volition lies interpretation. Before choices involving cooperation can be made, circumstances must be assessed and interests identified (Adler and Haas 1992, 376).

Interpretation, in turn, is assumed to depend on the body of knowledge actors hold at a given time and place. The body of knowledge shapes perception of reality and informs decision makers about linkages between causes and effects and thus between means and ends (Hasenclever et al. 1997, 147).

Cognitivist approach seeks to illuminate how new knowledge can influence the demand for rule-based cooperation among states and how new policy-relevant knowledge spreads and makes its way to central decision makers. Weak cognitivists in the study of regimes attempt to fill a gap in interest-based theoritizing by supplying a theory of interest change (Hasenclever, et al. 1997, 137).

Constructivists stress the importance of intersubjectively shared meanings for both regime formation and regime performance, which means that there should be a consensus on the nature of the problem and the manner in which this problem should be addressed. Thus, a minimum of collective understanding concerning the issues at stake is supposed to be necessary condition for the choice of a substantive body of rules (idem, 141).

To sum it up, constructivists attach major significance to knowledge – or more specifically to the process of learning – which is always intersubjective, i.e. is framed by mutual communication between states. Knowledge includes non-material structures such as beliefs, norms, identities and interests which in a constructivist sense assumedly go along with the latter. The logical chain here should be as follows: in the process of interaction states, which are still the main actors on the international arena, define and redefine their perceptions about themselves (identities), about others and about norms and rules, which they subsequently take into account. New information about

others changes these perceptions and states' interests and subsequently affects their behavior and choices for cooperation. For cooperation to succeed, there should exist at least some collectively shared meanings, i.e. collective understanding of issues at stake.

2.2.2. Social norms and their internalization: mechanisms

In order to understand what role norms play in shaping states' interests it seems logical to start with their definition. Katzenstein defines norms as "collective expectations for the proper behavior of actors within a given identity" (Katzenstein 1996a, 5). Norms can be regulative as standards of behavior "that shape interests", at the same time they can be constitutive as identities "that also define interests and thus shape behavior" (Katzenstein 1996b, 18).

The main idea behind constructivism in addressing social norms is the degree to which norms are internalized. According to Wendt (1999, 250), norms can play a part, when influencing the images of states depending on how deep the culture is embedded within the relations. Social context of cooperation changes an actors' identity and the way they view others in this cooperation by forming a sense of unity or a "we". Following this logic, socialization makes states redefine their identities and interests, since they are not static. Hence, the deeper norms are internalized the more they play a part in affecting states' interests and their choices for cooperation. It seems logical here to find out what the mechanisms of norms internalization could be.

Goodman and Jinks (2008) distinguish two different mechanisms for internalization. The *persuasion* mechanism is associated with coercion because there is always an actor or a group of actors who exercise enough influence, power or any other sort of persuasion instruments to convince others to abide by certain rules, to be more exact, to believe that these certain norms are legitimate. *Acculturation*, by contrast, refers to "the general process by which actors adopt the beliefs and behavioral patterns of the surrounding culture" (idem, 726). Following their logic, one may suppose that acculturation implies that actors voluntarily take on responsibility to accept, promote and maintain certain norms. Leaders may acculturate these norms partly or not at all (ibid.).

States that internalize norms in their behavior still have interests, but their interests are now endogenous rather than exogenous to norms. The latter shape interests either by establishing leaders' values or by inducing them to mimic the values of others. The key theoretical question therefore is not whether states pursue their self-interests, but how their interpretations of self-interest are constituted (idem, 9).

Mimicking implies that when norms are widely shared or at least given lip service, leaders not driven by normative commitments will seek to mimic leaders who have internalized norms and thus

benefit (Keohane 2009, 10). Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, 902-903) also argue that “if many states adopt new norms, others are likely to follow”.

Looking at how norms could influence communication between states, several causal pathways could be distinguished (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993, 8-24). First, norms may serve as *road maps*. Norms as road maps influence the choice of means to achieve the ends: out of the universe of possible actions decision makers select those which fit best with their normative and analytical understanding. Different choices at otherwise similar material circumstances can thus be explained in differences in belief systems of actors (Hesenclever et al. 1997, 143). Norms as road maps also explain the fact that states sometimes opt for different norms at different circumstances depending on which ones correspond better to their calculations about self-interest and gains.

Secondly, norms may facilitate cooperation serving as *focal points* “which help define acceptable solutions to collective action problems” (idem, 144). The existence of norms as focal points implies that there is a set of shared understanding on a range of issues, which demand common actions. States agree that it is easier to communicate having agreed on a common set of social norms. It may lead to the development of “epistemic communities” where groups of like-minded people, such as scientists, reinforce the need to bring about a common understanding of particular problems and common means to address these problems and thus generating a group thinking” (Haas 1992, 3).

Finally, once ideas have become generally accepted by all members of the group and considered legitimate, they are embodied in an institutional framework and constrain public policy “as long as they are not effectively undermined by new scientific discoveries or normative change” (Hasenclever et al. 1997, 144).

At least, two of these pathways are clearly related to international regimes. In the absence of norms as focal points regimes cannot be formed at all, because there is always a need not only for a coordinating mechanism, but also for a shared understanding on the content of the issues at stake and on the means to address them. As for the embedment of norms in institutions, “the impact of ideas may be prolonged for decades or even generations [...] even when no-one genuinely believes in them...” Ideas assume a life of their own (Goldstein and Keohane 1993, 20).

2.2.3. Wendt’s three types of social culture: Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian

Unlike rationalists who conceptualize structure in pure materialists terms, Wendt argues that structure is “social” which means that actors take each other “into account” in choosing their actions (Wendt 1999, 249). Structures are “distributions of ideas” or “stocks of knowledge”. Knowledge can be either private or shared. Shared ideas make up a subset of social structure known as “culture” (ibid.).

Wendt applies the same theorethizing to anarchy in international relations. He argues that anarchy is not inherent in the international system, but rather is constructed by actors, which operate in the system.

Self-help and power do not follow logically or causally from anarchy and if today we find ourselves in a self-help world, this is due to process, not structure (Wendt 1992, 394).

Hence, self-help and power politics are institutions, not essential features of anarchy. Since “institutions are fundamentally cognitive entities that do not exist apart from actors’ ideas about how the world works”, self-help is just “one of various structures of identity and interest” (idem, 199).

Wend distinguishes three types of cultures as applied to the anarchy in international relations: Hobbesian characterized by enmity and force, Lockean which deals with rivalry and self-interest and Kantian associated with friendship and norms. Each type of culture may have three degrees of norms’ internalization, which he summarizes as “force”, “prize” and “legitimacy”. In the first case, states observe norms because they are forced to, in the second – they do so because it is in their self-interest, and in the third – because they consider norms as legitimate. It’s only with the third degree of internalization that actors are really ‘constructed’ by culture (idem, 250).

		International Politics		
Degree of culture internalization	3d			
	2nd			
	1st			
		Hobbesian	Lockean	Kantian ⁶

Conversely to the logic applied by conventional IR theorists who reduce the role of shared ideas solely to cooperation, Wendt (1992, 253) argues that shared ideas may constitute conflict in the same way they constitute cooperation. Norms may be good or bad, they may tell states that to make war is heinous, or that it is glorious (Tannenwald, 1996, 48). In the same way, both bad and good norms may be either weakly or deeply internalized. Hence, Hobbesian culture may be represented by deeply shared ideas, while Kantian – only by weakly shared ones (ibid.). It depends on the way how culture – be it Hobbesian, Lockean or Kantian – is internalized within the system. In other

⁶ Source: Wendt (1992, 254). Figure 4. *The multiple realization of international culture*

words, Hobbesian “war of all against all” does not follow logically from anarchy but is just one of various possibilities of the structure of international system. What possibility exists in the world at a given time depends on actors who make their choices grounded on the ideas about themselves and others.

The Hobbesian culture is characterized by enmity. Since there is no chance that states can trust each other, everyone in the system relies only on oneself and is guided by the self-help principle. International relations are governed by the logic “sauve qui peut” and the culture is based on the worst scenario “kill or be killed” (idem, 262-265). The Self does not recognize the right of the Other to exist “as a free subject” and “therefore seeks to ‘revise’ the latter’s life or liberty” (idem, 261). Violence has no limits except for inadequate physical capabilities or the existence of some external restraint. Enmity gives actions of actors a particular meaning, which is derived from the structure of the role relationship. Wendt treats roles not as properties of the agents but rather properties of the social structure.

Although Hobbesian culture is driven by power and self-help principle, it does not mean that states do not have shared ideas. Conversely, Wendt argues that the situation of private knowledge – an aggressive state conquering another unknown state, like Mongols did to Medieval Europe – are not likely to last long and are not seen the modern world at all. War in itself is a “collective intentionality”, i.e. is a war only if actors treat it as a war (idem, 266).

Hence, we can observe three levels of Hobbesian culture internalization. At the first level actors are ‘forced’ to comply with the culture, their behavior is completely externally driven. The “quality of compliance” is very low. Once the compulsion is removed, the rules are broken. Although the states “*share* the knowledge” of the norms, they do not see any interest in compelling with them, neither do they accept them (idem, 269, emphasis added).

At the second degree of culture internalization states *accept* the culture, but purely instrumentally, i.e. as long as they benefit from it. Although states are not physically coerced into following the rules, everyone knows how the game is played and that “it is only a matter of time before they are under attack again” (idem, 271).

At the third degree of culture, states do not only know and accept norms, they also *want* to follow them because they think they are legitimate (idem, 272). As Wendt puts it,

to say that a norm is legitimate is to say that an actor fully accepts its claims on himself appropriating as a subjectively held identity the role in which they have been positioned by the generalized Other (ibid.).

In other words, “actors identify with others’ expectations, relating to them as a part of themselves” (ibid.). It is an apparent paradox in applying this reasoning to the Hobbesian culture: “How could actors have a stake in a culture the logical basis of which they are trying to destroy?” (idem, 273).

The answer to this question is material constraints to “kill” the other state – balance of power or inadequate military capabilities. If states had this power, they would have long exercised it. Power politics becomes an end in itself, a “glorious value”, not a means. States need the Other to play the role of enemy, i.e. to constitute its own identity (idem, 273).

In the **Lockean culture** the logic “kill or be killed” is replaced by “live and let live” (idem, 279). It is based on another role structure, which is rivalry. Sovereignty is recognized as a right and hence violence is self-limited (idem, 280). Self-restraint is exercised either out of self-interest or because norms are recognized as legitimate (ibid.). Rivalry implies that states operate in a status-quo fashion towards each other’s sovereignty (idem, 282). In this situation, states are more ‘relaxed’ about security, threats are not existential, future matters more and long-term goals may override relative gains. War is accepted as normal and legitimate but is limited to a sense of not conquering states. If a war of conquest does occur, others tend to act collectively to restore a status-quo (as in the World War II). In a rivalry culture states survive for “social not material reasons”, because others let them live. The weak are protected by the system (idem, 284). Balance of power is not a logical effect of the system but is a result of mutual recognition of sovereignty (ibid.).

There are three possibilities – coercion, self-interest and legitimacy – which correspond to three degrees of sovereignty rights internalized within the Lockean culture. For coercion to explain compliance with sovereignty norms, states neither recognize the right to life and liberty of others as legitimate, nor see it in their self-interests. In other words, the institution of sovereignty is shared in a sense that it is commonly known, but not commonly accepted (idem, 287). Wendt gives the example of Saddam Hussein or Hitler who would have revised the life and liberty of other states if they hadn’t been prevented by other states (idem, 286). The second degree of Lockean culture holds that states accept others’ right to sovereignty out of their own exogenously given interests, such as trade or security (idem, 287). In the rivalry culture states are indifferent to sovereignty norms per se, they abide by them because this serves some other purposes, hence “status quoness” is a strategy not an interest in itself (ibid.). In the third degree of Lockean culture internalization, states respect sovereignty because they see this norm as an end in itself, because they accept its claims as legitimate (ibid.).

Modern international politics is mainly represented by the third degree Lockean culture: states are self-interested but also self-restrained rational actors who see each other as rivals rather than enemies, which means that they recognize the right of others to exist and thus self-restrain from undermining sovereignty status quo (idem, 296). Although one may claim that this is the starting point for mainstream theorizing in IR, Wendt tries to prove that certain cultural background – not just given interests – makes it possible to explain international politics (ibid.).

Kantian culture is an idealist one characterized by non-violence and team play (idem, 297). It is based on a role structure which Wendt calls “friendship”. States expect from each other observance of two basic rules: first, that disputes will be settled without violence and secondly, that they will act collectively if security of one state is frightened by a third party (idem, 298-299). Wendt draws a parallel with “pluralistic security communities” introduced by Karl Deutsch. In pluralistic security communities “there is real assurance that the members of the community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way” (Deutsch et al. 1957, 5). “Real assurance” here is not some external coercion, but shared knowledge about each other’s peaceful intentions (Wendt 1999, 299). War is no longer considered a legitimate way of settling disputes. It does not mean that conflicts do not arise among states, but if they do they are resolved peacefully. Kantian culture changes the meaning of military power, which is no longer a threat, but rather “an asset to all” since states are sure that it will be used only on behalf of the collective (idem, 301). States help each other even if there is no “immediate return” (idem, 300). Hence, ‘friendship’ is “neither threat- nor time-specific”. Its members see each other as “a single unit for security purposes a priori” which is supposed to last indefinitely regardless of disagreements (idem, 301). This is how friendship differs from an alliance. Parties to the latter know their allies’ capabilities may be used against them when the collaboration is over.

While both neo-realists and neo-liberals suppose that Kantian culture will never occur in anarchy, Wendt argues that friendship is susceptible to the same three degrees of internalization as enmity or rivalry and hence norms of non-violence and non-interference can be merely a strategy or become part of the national interests. The logic here is the same as in explaining internalization of Hobbesian and Lockean cultures. At the first degree, states are coerced to refrain from the use of violence due to some external factors which threaten a group as a whole. It could be environmental devastation or nuclear war, which creates functional imperatives for states to cooperate against their will (idem, 303). At the second degree of Kantian culture internalization, “friendship is a strategy, an instrumentality that states choose to attain some benefits for themselves as individuals” (idem, 304).

It is only at the highest degree of internalization where the Self identifies itself with the Other, and international interests become part of national interests. “The cognitive boundaries of the Self are extended to include the Other; Self and Other form a single “cognitive region” (ibid, 305). Wendt calls it “collective identity”, but there are other terms to describe this phenomenon: “we-feeling”, “solidarity”, “common in-group identity”. Friendship is an outcome, not just a preference over a strategy (Powell 1994, 318). This helps generate altruistic behavior which means that states-friends can make sacrifices for the Other “for his own sake, because he has legitimate claims on the Self”

(Wendt 1992, 306). However, identification with the Other is rarely total and does not exclude egoism which result in arguments about free riding and burden sharing. Furthermore, states may take on several identities at the same time which Wendt calls “multiple group identifications”.

In my thesis, I will try to categorize Barents cooperation into one of the three types of social culture presented by Wendt – Hobbessian, Lockean or Kantian, as well as determine to which degree norms are internalized. In using these theoretical framework, I will show that neither self-help nor cooperation follow logically from the system of international relations but depend on the “cultural background”. In other words, states are not driven exclusively by exogenously given self-interests, but ground their decision on the representations of the Self and the Other.

Although Wendt builds his three types of cultures upon security cooperation, in my thesis I will apply this theorizing to cooperation in the Barents region as a whole not restricting it solely to security issues. The aim is to show how ‘culture’ which is composed of states’ identities, i.e. perceptions of the Self and the Other, and its internalization, which means to what extent norms are accepted as legitimate by all members, constitutes relations between states and how this affects cooperation.

3. METHODS AND MATERIAL

3.1. Cognitive process in IR

3.1.1. Positivism in IR

Positivism has been a dominant epistemological tool for most of the history of IR theory. It rests upon the assumption that social world can be observed with the same methods applied in natural sciences (Hasenclever et al. 1998, 161). Steve Smith and Patricia Owens (2005, 274) call it the “unity of science”. Scientific community and its objects of research are separated, i.e. the discovered laws of social interaction of rational actors are taken to be objectively true, to be independent of both the subjective viewpoint of the observer and the historical contingencies of the situations observed (idem, 162). International relations are governed by the same objective forces which rule the world of nature; these forces could be formulated in general laws and empirically tested. As Hollis and Smith put it (1990, 54) the main idea of positivism is that “hypotheses can be tested one at a time comparing their implications with objective, neutral facts of experience”.

Applying a positivist methodological tool, it follows that states are rational goal-seeking actors whose choices are guided by instrumental rationality, i.e. they always choose actions which could maximize their utility function. Their behavior can be objectively explained, classified to particular patterns and thus predicted. Rational choice theory is one of the examples how

neorealists/neoliberals see states' behavior. Positivist theories tend to focus on analyzing such features of international relations as interactions between states, security, balance of power, self-interest, etc. In addressing these issues they try to discover causal implications (cause-effect relationships) and underestimate the importance of norms and values in international relations.

Rationalist approach to international institutions implies that institutional arrangements are objectively influencing the behavior of states by affecting their calculations of interests. Both realists and liberals claim that interests are given and that they affect the choice of norms, not vice versa. Neo-realists say that power play a part in norm adherence or violation, neo-liberals hold states as "rational egoists" who care about absolute gains but as long as it is in their self-interest and hence may opt for different norms in different situations. Hence norms and rules are endogenous to interests and are "linked to the external causes of international conduct, the impact of which can be specified and tested by predicting state behavior on their basis" (Hasenclever et al. 1997, 162).

3.1.2. Post-positivism: the power of language and communication

Post-positivism, or reflectivism, became popular in 1980s as a response to the failure of positivist theories to predict the end of the Cold War (Monteiro and Ruby 2009). Post-positivism rejects the idea that empirical methods of natural science could be used in explaining social world. Post-positivism embraces normative theory, feminism studies, constructivism and it has also given rise to post-modernism in IR.

Reflectivists argue that the international system is socially constructed and thus cannot be separated from the human subjectivity. There are no bear facts which exist independently in all circumstances at any given time. Rather they are subjective and depend on their interpretation, that is, they are socially constructed. Wendt (1992) argues that social facts are no dependent variables and could be transformed by a variety of factors, such as states' identities, norms and social culture. Thus, according to him, anarchy is not a fundamental inherent condition of the international system – as conventional theorists see it, but is a social construct. It is just an "empty vessel" without meanings which actors assign to it (Wendt 1999, 309).

While positivists offer causal explanations of independently existing reality, post-positivists concentrate on constitutive components of international relations, that is, they seek to explore how a particular phenomenon (be it power, anarchy, interests or cooperation) is made up. For example, constructivists argue that interests are not exogenously given, that they are 'variables' dependent on states' identities which the latter acquire in the process of interaction.

Generally speaking, there is no neutral social theory as there is no independently existing reality. Social theory goes beyond simply describing and explaining the reality. The latter depends on how

humans see and interpret it. Social theory either defends the existing order or promotes it. As Cox (1986, 207) puts it, “[t]heory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose.” Thus, subject and object of research cannot be divided and reality is always subjective.

Based on these assumptions, post-positivism offers different methods of studying the social world. Reflectivists concentrate on the importance of language and communication in explaining international relations. According to Onuf (1998, 59), “talking is undoubtedly the most important way that we go about making the world what it is”. Qualitative Content Analysis, Theory of speech acts, Narrative Inquiry are all examples of methods, which post-positivists operate in explaining social reality.

3.2. Constructivism and its methods

3.2.1. Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative Content Analysis is an interdisciplinary method applied in social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, political science and also IR. Generally, it studies the content in communication, which could be in a form of a book, an article, an interview, a speech, a document, etc. Thus, any form of written or oral communication could be analyzed applying this method.

As Harold Lasswell (1948) puts it, content analysis enables to answer the following key questions: “Who says what, to whom, why, to what extent and with what effect?” Klaus Krippendorff (2004, 413) distinguishes between six questions, which must be addressed in every content analysis:

1. *Which data are analysed?*
2. *How are they defined?*
3. *What is the population from which they are drawn?*
4. *What is the context relative to which the data are analysed?*
5. *What are the boundaries of the analysis?*
6. *What is the target of the inferences?*

Content analysis could be quantitative or qualitative. While the former one derives meanings from the frequency of the key words or phrases used in the text, the qualitative content analysis focuses more on the intentionality and implications of the communicative message.

Content analysis studies not only the manifest content of the material. Becker and Lissman (as cited in Mayring 2010) have differentiated two levels of content: themes and main ideas of the text as primary content; context information as secondary content. It does not however exclude formal aspects of the material from the analysis. Content analysis embeds the text into a model of communication within which it defines the aims of analysis. As Krippendorff (1969, 103) puts it,

content analysis is a “replicable and valid method for making specific inferences from text to other states or properties of its source”.

The main idea behind qualitative content analysis is to classify the material into certain categories in accordance with the research question (Mayring 2010). The problem is that these categories are quite loose definitions and are almost exclusively results of the researcher’s own vision and interpretation. Hence, there is no strict definition on what a category or a variable for analysis should be and how they should be interpreted.

3.2.2. Theory of Speech Acts

Onuf argues that social world is constructed by deeds, which are determined by words rather than some physical activity. “Indeed, saying is doing: talking is undoubtedly the most important way that we go about making the world what it is” (Onuf 1998, 59). This notion is developed in a theory of speech acts.

As Onuf argues,

The distinctive claim of the theory of speech acts is that language is both representative and performative. People use words to represent deeds and they can use words, and words alone, to perform deeds (Onuf 1989, 82).

Hence, language plays a key role in Onuf’s analysis because it helps people to create social reality. Language does not only represent or describe the world, rather it constructs it.

A speech act is an “act of speaking” which makes “someone else to act” (Onuf 1998, 66). In other words an utterance becomes a speech act if it has an encouraging force, that is, makes others respond to it. “Because people respond to them [speech acts] with their own preferences”, they make “the material conditions and artifacts of human experience meaningful” (Onuf, 1989, 183).

Aristotle is credited with developing the basics of rhetorical theory. He divided speeches into three types on the basis of time: forensic, deliberative, and epideictic (1358b). Rhetoric of forensic speech concentrates on the events that occurred in the past, it questions guilt or innocence. The epideictic genre of rhetoric deals with the present and is used for ceremonial and commemorative purposes. Deliberative speeches, which Aristotle elevates above forensic and epideictic, address future issues. Deliberative genre of rhetoric is considered to be the most successful in arguing and is associated with policy-making speeches. While forensic speeches address what is just/unjust or right/wrong, deliberative speeches address what is advantageous/disadvantageous and are aimed at persuading an audience to take an action.

Austin (1981) in his book “How to do things with words” develops a classification of performative utterances to include locutionary (the act *of* saying something; has meaning), illocutionary (the act performed *in* saying something; adds different senses, there is certain force of saying something), and perlocutionary acts (the act performed *by* saying something; produces certain consequential effects) (Austin 1981, 99-103). Only the last one could be considered a speech act in a strict sense as it has an encouraging force in trying to persuade, convince, scare, enlighten, encourage, inspire, or otherwise make someone do or realize something.

Speech acts, which are repeated frequently, induce people to believe that “the words themselves and not the speakers mounting them” are responsible for what happens (Onuf 1998, 66). This is how words become conventions. Conventions remind agents what they have always done.

As agents become to realize that they *should* act as they always have, and not just because they always have acted that way, the convention gains strength as a *rule*. Rules keep the form of a speech act by generalizing the relations between speaker and hearer (Onuf 1998, 67, emphasis added).

Hence, Onuf argues that all rules are results of acts of speaking, while not all speech acts are successful enough to produce norms (1989, 86).

He describes three types of speech acts, which differ in how speakers relate words and world. *Assertive speech acts* (or ‘assertives’) inform the hearers about “the way things are” and “what consequences are likely to follow if they disregard this information” (ibid.). Assertives “either reflect an existing words-to-world fit or propose a new one. They do not endeavor to change an existing arrangement (Onuf 1989, 93). The principle of sovereignty is an example. *Directive speech acts* “fit world to words” because they change the world (ibid.). They say what you must do. *Commissive speech acts*, on the other hand, “fit words to world” (Ibid.). Commissives take a form of promises. They are the only ones which say what the *speaker* should do.

To sum it up, assertives are states of belief the speaker wishes hearers to accept, directives contain an action the hearer has to perform, and commissives oblige the speaker himself to commit a certain action in future. Therefore, commissive produce rules for the speaker, while assertives and directives generate rules for the hearer.

Similarly, Onuf (1989, 91) distinguishes three types of rules⁷ which are produced by these speech acts. Onuf claims this categorizing covers all social rules. Thus, assertive speech acts produce instruction-rules, which could be very general (principle of sovereignty is an example), or quite specific (instructions for operation appliances, filling committee seats, etc.). Directive speech acts take form of directive-rules or imperatives. “By telling agents what they must do, these rules leave no doubt as to what they should do” (Onuf 1998, 67). Directives always provide information about

⁷ A rule is used in a sense of a norm, which is both regulative and constitutive.

the consequences for disregarding them. Commissive speech acts become commitment-rules. “Agents are most likely to recognize these rules in their effects. These effects are rights and duties that agents know they possess with respect to other agents” (ibid.).

Onuf continues by elaborating on how rules make up international regimes. He argues that “International regimes [...] have rules that work in different ways (assertive-, directive-, and commitment-rules) in different proportions (idem, 70). When instruction-rules are most in evidence, agents are situated in networks of rules and related practices. The balance of power is an example.

When directive-rules are most in evidence, agents are situated in a chain of command, a firm, or an organization. A sphere of influence is such an institution made up of informal *directive-rules*. These rules direct weak states within the sphere to carry out a much stronger state’s wishes.

Finally, when commitment-rules are most in evidence, agents end up in partnerships, or associations, with other agents. Treaties are themselves simple institutions minimally consisting of formal *commitment-rules* that apply only to the states adopting such treaties. When two or more states adopt a treaty, they act as members of an association giving them at least some rights in common, including the right to commit themselves to each other. The principle that treaties are binding, and therefore legal, automatically provides them with support from other, highly formal rules.

3.3. Research orientation of the study and material

3.3.1. Structure of the analysis: matching theoretical framework and methodology

Applying the theoretical framework of constructivism in my thesis, I will first try to define what type of culture the Barents cooperation is. To do so I will explore how states identify themselves in the region and how they relate to others and to the region. Qualitative content analysis will play a part here. The focus will be on tracing the communicative language of politicians’ speeches in order to find common and different views of the Self, the Other and the region which can be claimed to constitute a culture in the Barents cooperation.

Secondly, I will try to find out what degree of norm internalization one can observe in the region taking into consideration that only at the third level we can strictly speak about social construction of states’ interests. In order to do so, it is necessary to define what mechanism is working for norms internalization. It is logical to suppose that if persuasion mechanism dominates it means lower degree of culture, if acculturation – higher. In analyzing speeches of official representatives of Barents states, I will try to categorize them into Onuf’s types of speech acts, and hence make a conclusion on what kind of rules prevail in the Barents cooperation. Aristotle’s classification into speeches on the basis of time as well as Austin’s contribution to the theory of speech acts may help

to determine what purpose the speaker follows: to encourage the audience to take some action, to express his attitude, to recall the past, to blame or to praise. Resting upon these findings, I will make an assumption on to what extent norms are internalized within the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and what degree of culture the Barents cooperation is according to Wendt.

It is also useful to draw a parallel with the ‘casual pathways’ developed by Keohane and Goldstein who say that norms may serve as road maps, focal points or institutions. The same categorizing mentioned above may be applied here. If we see that states have private beliefs which they don’t share with other members of cooperation, it says that they view norms primarily as road maps and that the level of culture is low. In contrast, if we see that there is a strong identification with the region and a strong commitment to act in accordance with “collectively shared meanings”, then we can argue that norms serve as focal points or even have been institutionalized and thus there is a high degree of social culture in the region.

3.3.2. Analysis of documents

Before starting to explore the speeches of relevant actors from which a communicative language could be traced about the influence of identities and social culture on the Barents cooperation, it seems necessary to address documents, which embrace the main goals actors set, as well as problems and spheres for collaborations they consider important. It will be in part a comparative analysis of three declarations – the founding document of the BEAC – the Kirkenes Declaration 1993, 10 Years Anniversary Declaration, and the Kirkenes Declaration 2.0.

This chapter will be mainly a formal institutional analysis (as described by Barkin 2006, 27-31) of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council as an international organization according to some parameters such as the founding of the organization, its bureaucratic structure and decision-making procedures, as well as financing and voting instruments. In the documents, I will pay attention to what topics are brought to the fore, how goals and priorities of the organization have changed.

3.3.3. Analysis of speeches

This is supposed to be the main part of my empirical research. In order to answer the research question “*What role do identity and norms play in interests’ formation of Barents states and how does this affect the Barents cooperation?*” I will scrutinize and compare speeches of Prime Ministers or Foreign Ministers of Norway, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Denmark as well as the EU representatives. As a part of my research, I will investigate speeches made at the

conference of 1997 in Rovaniemi⁸ which assembled by then already former Ministers of Foreign affairs who had signed the cooperation treaty – Stoltenberg, Kozyrev, Väyrynen and af Ugglas, as well as Prime Minister of Finland Paavo Lipponen, the President of Iceland Olafur Grimsson and a representative from the EU Timo Summa. The idea was also to hear their assessments on the development so far and to bring out their views on the future of the region (Riepula 2006)⁹. The fact that at that time they had already resigned from their ministerial posts explains for their possibility to speak quite freely on the issues addressed at the conference.

I will compare these speeches to the other ones delivered at different times throughout 20 years of the Barents cooperation, including those made at the 20th Anniversary of the Barents Summit held on 3-4 June 2013 in Kirkenes by the representatives of the same countries.

It should be said that my initial aim was to compare only speeches delivered in 1997 and 2013, but during my research I found out that this material would not be enough to make a conclusion on what role identity and norms play in interests' formation of Barents states and how this affects cooperation in the Barents. What is more, the context in which politicians spoke on these two dates is different. While the conference conducted in 1997 was not an official Barents meeting and some of the reporters were then already retired ministers, the speech delivered in 2013 is an official BEAC Foreign Ministers meeting and thus politicians did not feel the same liberty in expressing their opinions¹⁰. Thereupon, I decided to analyze as many texts as I would be able to find. The official web-site of the BEAC was not enough in accomplishing this task, only some of speeches delivered by BEAC Foreign Ministers at the biennial BEAC sessions are available¹¹. Others have been found on the web-sites of the Ministries for Foreign Affairs of respective member-states. The different amount of texts analyzed for each member depends on their availability. This could already be considered as one of the findings of the thesis, which proves the fact that some states seem to be more involved in cooperation and regard Barents region as an important part of their self-image, while others disregard it and seem to pay less attention to Barents cooperation.

⁸ The conference held in Rovaniemi on 15-16 September 1997 was called "Barents Region today: Dreams and Realities". The minutes of speeches are available in *Europe's Northern Dimension: the BEAR meets the south* (1997), ed. by L. Heininen & R. Langlais. Rovaniemi: University of Lapland.

¹⁰ Unfortunately, I did not manage to collect speeches delivered at the official BEAC meeting in 1993 or around this year.

¹¹ There are only two full lists of speeches available at the official web site of the BEAC – from BEAC sessions conducted in 2009 and 2011.

In order to answer the research question and structure the analysis I decided to divide the parameters according to which I read and interpret the texts into three groups: “identities”, “interests” and “norms”.

Identities

In this part, I will inquire into how states relate to the Barents Euro-Arctic Council as an instrument of cooperation and what role do they attach to it. I will also look at how states view themselves and others in this cooperation. This will be an analysis of the Self – Other dichotomy. In order to answer these questions I will apply qualitative content analysis, assuming that the language is important in shaping the ‘reality’ of the Barents cooperation.

Interests

Since my hypothesis is that national interests are not given and that identities affect states’ behavior and play a part in formulating the former, I will look at what goals and priorities have been brought to the fore by the speakers at different times so as to trace how interests of the BEAC members changed for twenty years.

Norms

Looking at how norms influence cooperation among BEAC members, I will study which norms seem to be of utmost importance and which are neglected. I will try to find out whether there are norms and values shared and accepted as legitimate by all (or majority) of states and if not which states stay outside. Looking at the communicative language of speakers and deciding whether it is more in normative or realist terms will help to make a conclusion on to what extent norms are internalized and what type and degree of social culture the Barents cooperation is. At this stage of the analysis I will use the theory of speech acts and the qualitative content analysis.

This analysis will enable to see what type and degree of culture the BEAC is and whether it is indeed socially constructed. If so, then a conclusion could be made that states’ behavior is affected by their identities and social norms shared within the cooperative structure. Consequently, the hypothesis could be supported that national interests are not given invariables and that foreign policy decisions, e.g. choices to accede to and participate in international institutions, are derived from the self-image of the individual states, which they acquire through the process of communication.

4. ELEMENTS OF THE BARENTS COOPERATION

In this paragraph, I will look at the Barents Euro-Arctic Council as an international organization. Stemming from its founding documents – Kirkenes Declaration 1993 and the Terms of Reference – I will pay attention to such parameters as the establishment of the organization, its bureaucratic structure, decision-making procedures and financing to give an idea of how the Barents Euro-Arctic Council is functioning. 10 Years Anniversary Declaration, as well as Kirkenes Declaration 2.0 will be studied to see how goals and priorities of cooperation have changed.

4.1. Historical background of cooperation

According to knowledge-based theorists, rationalists are wrong in applying basically static approach to the study of international relations, which is ill-equipped to account for learning (at the unit level) and history (at the system level) (Hasenclever, et al. 1997, 5). Indeed, history, or more exactly collective memory, plays an important role in forming a ‘self-image’ and constructing national identity. As a German historian Jan Assmann (2000, 18) puts it, the members of some collectives form “self images” of their groups and “retain an identity for generations by forming a culture of remembrance”. According to Assmann and Czaplicka (1995, 132) knowledge preserved in collective memory have both formative and normative functions. While the former provide for educating, civilizing and humanizing the latter create and maintain rules of conduct (ibid.). My assumption is that history of the Barents cooperation and the collective memory of people, who have been inhabiting the Barents Euro-Arctic region, plays an important role in explaining the success of the BEAC which according to Lassi Heininen (2007, 211) is “an excellent example of stability-building structure” in the North of Europe.

Although the Barents Euro-Arctic Council was founded quite recently – following the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which made contacts along the former East-West borderline possible, the roots of the Barents cooperation are to be found in much earlier historical periods. Traditionally the land which is now composed of the northernmost regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia was culturally homogenous and inhabited although scarcely but almost exclusively by indigenous Sami people (Nielsen 2001, 164). In the 13th century the region was increasingly explored by Russians who founded their first permanent settlements in Pechenga, Keger, Cola and other places on the Cola Peninsula and started trade with Norwegians. This laid the foundation for what further was regarded to as the Pomor trade.

In general the period from the 13th century till the 20th century was marked by constant geopolitical transformations within the region. The Kalmar Union between Sweden, Norway and Denmark lasted for 126 years which brought relative stability to the region. The Union between Norway and

Sweden existed for 90 years. For 700 years Finland and Karelia were part of Sweden and for 108 years Finland belonged to Russia. Thus, we can see that borders fluctuated a lot and apart from wars and territorial disputes there were examples of cooperation.

Stokke and Castberg (1993, 21) distinguish two major periods:

- the Pomor era – from the end of the 17th till 1917 – when coastal regions were the centers of cooperation.
- The Nordic era – from the end of 1950s till the end of 1980s – with the North Atlantic as the main uniting force.

Nielsen (2001, 169) calls the period of the Pomor trade the “cornerstone” of Norwegian-Russian relations in the 19th century. The term “pomor” comes from the Russian word “pomorye” which means lands surrounding the Sea and is referred to the littoral territories of the White Sea. The trade which implied exchange of natural resources – Russian grain and wood for Norwegian fish – was very extensive. According to Norwegian sources, around 300-350 ships sailed to Finnmark and Tromsø every year in 1840s, Russian historians claim that the Pomor fleet totaled 400 vessels. Although the Pomor trade officially started in 1740s, Nielsen claims that there are reasons to believe that it was already under way at the end of the 17th century (idem, 169). Nielsen (2001, 171) calls Pomors “harbingers” of spring as every year when ice melted in the White Sea, Norwegians and Sami waited for Russians to provide with fish in return for winter provision of grain and wood. As a result, strong ties with locals were established and the trade itself ‘spilled-over’ to other spheres of life: language, social interaction and cultural exchange. The Pomor trade developed a pidgin language ‘russenorsk’ to which Norwegians and Russians contributed approximately the same amount of words. Apart from the bargaining there was a great deal of social interaction: there were cases of intermarriages, sometimes Russian families settled in Norway, at the same time, Norwegians were sent to Arkhangelsk to learn Russian commerce, culture and language.

Although the Pomor trade was favored and given highly positive assessment by both Norwegian and Russian governing circles as being economically beneficial for their respective countries, it didn’t exclude mutual suspicion which was mainly among authorities, not on the local level. From the first sight, the trade seemed to be quite a spontaneous “free ride” but in fact it was seriously monitored by the government of the opposite country (Nielsen 2001, 171). Norwegians were afraid of the growing Russian influence in the North as a naval power and their possible ‘possessive’ claims for the northern Norwegian territories. For Russia, Norway was more a country to learn from not to be afraid of. The difference in economic development of Finnmark and Murmansk oblast was striking. Maintaining good relationship with Norway was considered the best way to protect and develop Russian Northern borders.

The Soviet revolution of 1917 put an end to cooperation across the Russia-Europe border and yielded closer collaboration between the Nordic countries under the umbrella of the North Callote Committee founded in 1967 first as a temporal institution, and then made permanent in 1977. It was renamed to the North Callote Council in 1997. Although there were some attempts to conduct cooperative initiatives from the Murmask oblast, the end of the Second World War and the subsequent Cold War ‘freezed’ the Barents cooperation between Russia and Nordic countries: almost no contacts were possible across the border. The world was divided into two confronting political, military and ideological camps, and this division was clearly seen in the North due to heavy military presence in this region.

The speech of Michael Gorbachev in 1987 is usually cited as a “harbinger” of the thaw in international relations. According to Pettersen (2012, 18) the speech changed the perception of the Arctic as an arena for Cold War confrontation with the further positive consequences for the Barents cooperation. The ‘Gorbachev Initiative’ was a signal from the Soviet Russia for more extensive cooperation with the West on Arctic affaires and that scientific communities “lost no time in reintroducing an earlier plan for a circumpolar body to foster greater cooperation among Arctic scientific organizations” (Roots and Rogne 1987). The first initiative was introduced by Finland in 1991 and produced the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) which was further incorporated in the Arctic Council. This was the first cooperative intergovernmental vehicle in the High North to deal with environmental monitoring and conservation. Alongside the development of these circumpolar bodies, two other organizations appeared: the Danish-German initiative resulted in the foundation of the Baltic Sea States Council in 1992 and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council the following year (Honneland and Stokke 2007, 2).

4.2. Establishment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council: when, who and why

Dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of capitalist-socialist confrontation on the international arena made contacts across the East-West border possible and created “extra political room” for regions which triggered organizing transnational regional structures all along the former East-West borderline (Nielsen 2001, 163). The process started from the south – the Turkish-initiated “Black Sea Cooperation”, continued to the Central Europe – the Central European Initiative, and finally came to the north where the Baltic Sea Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council were established in 1992 and 1993 respectively (ibid.). Engstad (1994, 18-19) also points to the general regionalization trend in Europe in 1970s of which the Barents cooperation was a part. The same trend was laid down in the BEAC founding document – Kirkenes Declaration:

We see the Barents cooperation initiative as part of the process of evolving European cooperation and integration, which has been given a new dimension with the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Barents Euro-Arctic Council, 2013a).

Bulatov and Shalev (2005, 75) refer to the classification into two major stages of the Barents cooperation – the Pomor trade and the Nordic eras – introduced by Stokke and Catsberg (1993, 21), and suggest that the establishment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in 1993 could be considered as the third stage in the development of this cooperation with “the center of gravity” having shifted back to the littoral territories taking into consideration the growing attention to the Northern Sea route.

There is no reason to undervalue the role of the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Thorvald Stoltenberg, who took the political initiative to launch the Kirkenes declaration of January 11th 1993 (Rafaelson 2010, 26). However, the success of the Barents cooperation also owes its credit to “a maturing process among local and regional individuals”, which started before the official launch of the Barents cooperation (ibid.). Their motives were either new business possibilities connected with trade and investment, or simply a desire to have more exchange and contact with the Russian neighbors (ibid.)¹².

Nevertheless the task to start negotiations and cooperation with a newly born Russia was not an easy one. Nowadays Barents region is a synonym of peace and stability, but the situation was very much different in the early 1990s. Suspensions and uncertainty prevailed. During the Cold War the border between Kirkenes and Murmansk had been among the most closed and people were not used to have any contacts across borders. As the then political advisor to the Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg and one of the architects of the original Kirkenes Declaration Sverre Jervell comments in his interview to the Information Agency “Bi-port”, at the time of signing the Declaration, “everyone was very uncertain if the Cold War had really ended”. He adds:

Actually it was good that they didn't know that the Cold War ended. Otherwise this cooperation would not have started. This is a paradox but this is very simple. They considered that the Cold War was still going on and that they needed to stop it (Translation of the author)¹³.

In these conditions “bringing the regions together in direct cooperation across national borders was something completely new” (as cited in Lund 2012).

The overall objective which made representatives of five Nordic countries and the European Commission as well as its recent enemy and dangerous neighbor – the former Soviet Union – meet

¹² The triennial North Calottes' Days of Peace which in 1966 were conducted in Murmansk could serve as an example of cooperation across the West-East border during the Cold War period – if not at the top political level, but at the regional one between NGOs, cultural organizations, science community.

¹³ “В общем-то, хорошо, что они не знали, что холодная война закончилась, иначе бы это сотрудничество не могло бы состояться. Это парадоксально, но очень просто. Они же считали, что холодная война продолжается и её нужно прекратить” (B-port, 2013).

together on January 11, 1993 and sign the Kirkenes declaration was to underpin stability and prosperity in the region. More specifically, it was aimed at reducing military tensions, addressing environmental threats and bridging the gap in the West-East development (Honneland and Stokke 2007, 4). According to Lassi Heininen (2007, 211), the policy model in the BEAC has proven to be extremely successful in stability-building in the post-Cold War circumpolar North, and this policy model has a certain ‘export potential’”. He puts the BEAC in a geopolitical context called ‘Northern Europe’ – a new ‘old’ concept for the Barents North which includes both Western countries (Denmark, Sweden), and Eastern powers like Russia, and was very often seen in the past as a ‘battlefield’ between the East and the West. However, since the start of the 21st century, it has been one of the most dynamic regions in Europe, at the crossroad between the West and the East (ibid.).

4.3. Bureaucratic structure

The Barents cooperation is quite a unique institution in international relations – it was created as a two-tiered structure. At the inter-governmental level, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council was established as “the forum for intergovernmental and interregional cooperation” to “provide impetus to existing cooperation and consider new initiatives and proposals” and united Russia, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland (Barents Euro-Arctic Council 1993a). In addition, the Barents Regional Council (BRC) was founded under the Protocol Agreement from the Statutory Meeting of the Regional Council of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region to the Kirkenes Declaration and united counties in the northernmost parts of the member-states: Lapland province in Finland, Troms, Finnmark and Nordland provinces in Norway, Archangelsk and Murmansk Oblasts in the northwestern Russia and Norrbotten and Västerbotten in Sweden. As soon as in April 1993 the Republic of Karelia joined the Regional Council. Komi Republic and Nenets Autonomous Okrug acceded later and up until 2002 the BRC expanded also to the Finnish counties of Oulu and Kainuu. North Karelia was granted an observer status in 2008. At the time of writing, the Barents Regional Council is comprised of 13 provinces which is a vast territory with approximately 6 million people and an area as large as France, Portugal, Spain and Germany together, totaling 1,75 million sq. km, of which 75% of the territory and population is Russian. Several indigenous peoples live in the region, e.g., the Sami, Nenets and Vepsians who are also represented in the BRC. In my thesis I will concentrate on the inter-governmental level, thus leaving behind the scope the work of the BRC.

The BEAC is the body for intergovernmental cooperation in the Barents Region. The Kirkenes declaration defines the Council as the “the forum for intergovernmental and interregional cooperation”, although some traits of an international organization can also be applied to it.

There are at least six characteristics of an international organization (Glebov and Milaeva 2010, 82-83):

1. Respect for the principle of sovereignty of the member-states. Any kind of international organization is established on a legal basis, i.e. it does not infringe upon rights and interests of its members and the international community as a whole.
2. Existence of a founding treaty. Parties to such a treaty are sovereign states or international organizations.
3. Membership of at least 3 states. What makes actors to decide to set up an international organization is the will to unite its forces in a particular sphere, such as political (OSCE), military (NATO), economic (OECD), financial (IMF), etc. or to coordinate the activity of its members in practically all spheres (UN).
4. Permanent bodies and head-quarters. This proves a continuous character of an international organization and distinguishes it from other forms of international cooperation.
5. Respect for the principle of non-interference. This implies the existence of rights and obligations which are laid down in its founding treaty.
6. An established decision-making procedure. An international organization has its own autonomous international rights and obligations, which means that it has its autonomous will which should be distinguished from the will of its member states (Translation of the author).

All of them could be applied to the BEAC except for the last one – an autonomous will – which is questionable. First of all, the BEAC was established on a legal basis in accordance with the international law and it does not infringe upon interests of its members. Its founding treaty is the Kirkenes Declaration from the Conference of Foreign Ministers on Co-operation in the on January, 11, 1993. According to the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties the Kirkenes Declaration could be considered an international treaty as it falls under the definition of a ‘treaty’ stipulated in Article 2 of the Convention:

“treaty” means an international agreement concluded between States in written form and governed by international law, whether embodied in a single instrument or in two or more related instruments and whatever its particular designation (United Nations Treaty Collection 1969).

and also under the Article 5:

[t]he present Convention applies to any treaty which is the constituent instrument of an international organization and to any treaty adopted within an international organization without prejudice to any relevant rules of the organization (idem).

The declaration reveals peaceful intentions of its parties who expressed their conviction that cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region “will contribute substantially to stability and progress in the area and in Europe as a whole” (Barents Euro-Arctic Council 1993a). The primary aim of the Barents cooperation is to improve living conditions, to encourage sustainable economic and social development and thus contribute to stability, progress and a peaceful development in northernmost Europe. In line with the aim to “promote sustainable development in the Region” signatories to the declaration also refer to other international treaties such as the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 of UNCED.

The functioning of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council is stipulated in the Terms of Reference for the Council of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and the Administrative Manual. The Members of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council – Norway, the Russian Federation, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Denmark, the European Commission and a representative from indigenous peoples – convene every year at the Foreign Minister level (since 2001 – every second year). At present, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom and the USA are participating as observers. According to the terms of Reference “the chairmanship will initially rotate between Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden” (Barents Euro-Arctic Council 1993b).

Between the Council sessions the work of the BEAC is organized by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)¹⁴. Its members are senior ministerial deputies. The Committee prepares the sessions of the BEAC, giving guidelines to the central working groups and initiating new actions for cooperation. Participation in the Council will not in any way infringe on any international obligation, be it of a legal or a political nature, undertaken by any of the participating states (Barents Euro-Arctic Council 1993c).

There are two types of subsidiary bodies under CSO: working groups and task forces. Working Groups are appointed on a permanent basis and are given their mandate by the CSO. There are working groups operating at the inter-governmental level, at the regional level and also joint working groups. They all address issues relevant for the Barents Region, e.g. economics, customs, environment, transport, rescue, tourism, culture, etc. There is also a working group of indigenous peoples.

Task Forces are established for specific issues or actions to be undertaken during a limited period of time. They could be established by the CSO or by a Working Group. There is, for example, a Barents Forest Task Force established within the Working Group on Economic Cooperation. Provided that some specific issue has become of key importance for the Region, a Task Force may become a permanent Working Group. Thus, a Task Force on customs cooperation established in 1999, became a permanent working group in 2004, entitled Working Group on Trade Barriers, renamed in 2008 to Working Group on Customs Cooperation. Besides, the International Barents Secretariat was set up in 2007 to provide technical support for BEAC.

As for an autonomous will, this is what the BEAC definitely lacks and what prevents it from categorizing it into an international organization in a full sense of the word. All goals and priorities of the organization are decided upon by representatives of members-states who are not completely free from expressing and promoting their distinct national interests. What is more, whatever their

¹⁴ For the organization charter of the BEAC see Appendix №1.

decisions could be they would not have any legally binding force and thus could serve only as recommendations or guidelines.

4.4. International Barents Secretariat

The purpose of the International Barents Secretariat (IBS), which was established at the 11th BEAC Ministerial session on 15 November 2007 in Rovaniemi, is to provide technical support for the multilaterally coordinated activities within the framework of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council (Barents Euro-Arctic Council 1993d).

The IBS is aimed at increasing and securing the coherence and efficiency of the Barents cooperation as well as helping the biennial rotation of governmental and regional Chairs in their tasks and guaranteeing the seamless continuity of the cooperation.

The fact that Norway, Russia, Sweden and Finland decided to establish and co-finance the secretariat shows that “interaction in the Barents Region is a political priority” (Newsletter by International Barents Secretariat 2010). The secretariat is a tool for the national and the regional levels of the cooperation, i.e. the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council respectively. It is a priority for the secretariat to serve the chairmanships of both of them.

The IBS is also a tool for communication and promotion of the Barents cooperation and is responsible for the content of the web site: www.beac.st. It also sends press-releases on a regular basis to media in the Barents Region.

According to Alexander Ignatiev, the former head of International Barents Secretariat, the establishment of the Barents secretariat is one of the achievements which ‘upgrades’ the status of the BEAC from being merely a forum for interaction between member-states to an institution which could be qualified as an international organization:

The Barents Council is also developing. Being a political forum as it was established about 20 years ago, it has been getting features of an international organization, which has already initiated conclusion of the two legally binding intergovernmental agreements – on rescue cooperation and on the establishment of our Secretariat (Ignatiev 2011).

4.5. Decision-making procedure

According to the Terms of Reference, “the Council will normally convene once a year at Foreign Minister level” (Barents Euro-Arctic Council 1993b). However, since 2001 meetings have been conducted every second year. After each ministerial meeting a Joint Communiqué is produced. There are as well some extra meetings of specialized ministers conducted when necessary, e.g. meeting of Ministers of transport and infrastructure on 24 September, 2013 in Narvik, Norway. All decision made by Foreign Ministers are legally non-binding and take form of Declarations or Joint

Communiqués. The Regional Council could produce documents that regard only territories included in the region not to the entire national states.

The Kirkenes declarations 1993 and 2013 are also of legally non-binding force. There are only two legally-binding agreements. The first one is in the sphere of rescue operations – the Agreement between the Governments of Finland, Norway, the Russian Federation and Sweden in the field of Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response which was signed on 11 December 2008 in Moscow and took effect on 17 May 2012 upon ratification by all Parties. Another one is the Agreement on the Establishment of an International Barents Secretariat which among other things stipulates its operating budget and prescribes the share of financial contributions which are to be made by Norway, Russia, Finland and Sweden.

4.6. Financing

According to Barkin (2006, 31), international organizations are generally thought of as being funded by member states. The constitutional documents of most international organizations specify either the funding mechanism or rules for arriving at a funding mechanism for the international organizations. This is not the case for the BEAC which has no fixed and permanent financing instrument. Funding sources are different, i.e. each working group or task force has to search on their own for resources to support a particular action plan or program. This is one of its main drawbacks and an obstacle to efficiency which also prevents from considering the BEAC an international organization.

No Terms of Reference for the Council of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, neither the Administrative Manual for the BEAC provide a clear picture of financial mechanisms. There are two financing possibilities stipulated in the Administrative Manual for the BEAC. The first one regards financing of participation in ministerial meetings. The main principle here is that the country chairing the meeting, or if agreed the country hosting the meeting, bears the costs. The participants cover the expenses for travel and stay and of their respective delegations. All action plans and programs are jointly financed by parties involved. It is the responsibility of each CSO subsidiary body to clarify financial implications, including division of costs, before adopting action plans or programs.

Hence, it could be said the activity of the BEAC is project-based. Financing usually comes from the national governments, or the funds raised from the programs, under which the projects are conducted, i.e. INTERREG. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway is probably the most active in providing financial support for joint projects. For instance, every year the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign affairs place 35 million NOK (4,5 million EUR) at the disposal of the Norwegian Barents

Secretariat to support regional Norwegian-Russian cooperation projects. Interestingly, only Norwegian partners could apply for this financial support (Norwegian Barents Secretariat s.a.). As expressed by the former chair of the Regional working group on the environment,

The first obstacle we met was in finding financing for our work. There was no common financing of activities, as was the case with the North Calotte cooperation. [...] Instead we had to – and still have to – apply for money in different countries for each project. This made multilateral projects difficult to carry out. Therefore, most of the projects in the Barents Region have been bilateral (Christiansen, cited in Stokke et al. 2007, 88).

Financing of bilateral projects has come partly from the regular budgets of national or regional authorities, partly from ‘Barents institutions’ such as the Nordic countries’ Barents secretariats. The IBS was established with the aim to improve stability of fund raising. As stipulated in the Article 5 of the Agreement on the Establishment of the International Barents Secretariat (Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2007), it has an annual operating budget comprised of each country’s contributions of which 50% comes from Norway as a host country and the rest is divided equally between Norway, Finland, Sweden, Russia, leaving them 12,5% each. Thus, Norway contributes a lion’s share to the IBS – as much as 62, 5 %. It should be mentioned here, that neither the EU, no Denmark and Iceland contribute to the Secretariat financially.

The Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, delivering a speech at the 20th Anniversary Barents Summit, underlined the necessity to provide Barents projects with long-term and permanent mechanisms of funding:

... there are plenty of positive examples in this sphere. I’m referring to the activities of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, and regional mechanisms like the Black Sea Bank for Trade and Development. We must analyze all this and make a choice (Medvedev 2013a).

The Russian proposal was included in the Kirkenes Declaration 2.0:

We welcome the proposal by the Russian Federation to investigate the possibility of establishing a financial mechanism in the Barents region to support project activities and to facilitate making full use of the region’s investment potential. We encourage the Barents Euro-Arctic Council to take appropriate action in this regard (Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2013).

To sum it up, the BEAC could be considered an international organization according to at least 5 characteristics: it was established in accordance with the international law and has a founding treaty – the Kirkenes Declaration. The BEAC has 7 members – Norway, the Russian Federation, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Denmark and the European Union – the rights and obligations of which are laid down in the Terms of Reference for the Council. The work of the BEAC is hierarchically organized (see organization charter in Appendix №1) and continuity is provided by the meetings of Foreign Ministers – members of the Council and the work of the Committee of Senior Officials under the authority of which operate Working Groups and Task Forces. International Barents Secretariat was established in 2007 to technically support the daily work of the BEAC and to stabilize its fund-raising. There is also an established decision-making procedure. The only characteristic which BEAC lacks is the existence of its own autonomous will independent of the will of its state-

members. Member-states and the EU are undoubtedly the main actors in the BEAC and the key decision-makers.

4.7. From Kirkenes Declaration 1993 to Kirkenes Declaration 2.0

Kirkenes Declaration 1993

As stated in the Kirkenes Declaration 1993, the primary aim of BEAC is to “contribute substantially to stability and progress in the area and in Europe as a whole, where partnership is replacing the confrontation and division of the past” and to “promote sustainable development in the Region”. In this regard, states commit themselves to the principles of the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 of UNCED. The language of the Declaration reveals common understanding of the necessity to overcome Cold War division and move from thinking in terms of confrontation to consensus and cooperation in addressing environmental challenges, bridging the gap in the level of living across the East-West border, etc. Parties to the declaration also express support for the process of reforms in Russia and the need to strengthen democracy, market reforms, and local institutions.

As for the spheres of cooperation, *environment* takes the first place. Environmental challenges are stated to be of “transboundary” nature and are to be tackled by joint bilateral or multilateral efforts. Safety of nuclear facilities, hazardous nuclear waste and air pollution – especially on the Cola Peninsula – are of primary concern. In their dedication to protect vulnerable Arctic and Barents nature and environment, participants of the Declaration express commitment to such international treaties as Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic signed on 22 September, 1992, Strategy for Protection of the Arctic Environment, adopted at the Ministerial Meeting in Rovaniemi two years before the meeting in Kirkenes. States recognize the need to adopt common ecological criteria for the exploitation of natural resources and to integrate environment dimension into “all activities in the Region” (Barents Euro-Arctic 1993a).

Economic cooperation comes second. Priority is given to promotion of trade, investment and energy collaboration in an environmentally friendly manner. As stated in the declaration, it is important to insure a link between energy, trade and environment.

Thirdly, due to “vulnerable character” of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and “similar climatic conditions”, participants stress the importance of *scientific and technological cooperation* in order to “exchange relevant experience and information and encourage the transfer of technologies” in such spheres as construction, fisheries, aquaculture, forestry, mining, off-shore technology, etc.

The fourth section is devoted to improving *regional infrastructure*. This issue is given special attention due to the lack of connections across West-East border during the Cold War and the necessity to overcome this gap by developing transport and telecommunication means. However, it

is underlined that members of the BEAC should avoid duplication of efforts taken by other actors in this direction at bilateral and multilateral level.

Rights of *indigenous peoples* are addressed in the fifth place. The declaration does not envisage their direct participation in the BEAC, although the establishment of a Working Group on Indigenous Issues with representatives from Indigenous peoples and local authorities from Russia, Finland, Norway and Sweden is proposed.

Another basis for the Barents cooperation is *human contacts* across the borders. *Tourism* is also an important factor in promoting Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation, which could increase human contacts, improve economic cooperation and revitalize business activities in the trans-border regions. In this regard Participants call for taking efforts in improving tourism infrastructure and environment.

Thus, stemming from the analysis of the Kirkenes Declaration, it could be traced that the overall objective of the Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation – contributing to security, stability and peaceful sustainable development in the Region – is to be achieved by cooperation in such priority areas as environment, trade, scientific/technological exchange, as well as development of infrastructure. It seems from the text of the Declaration that environment is the priority number one for member-states. The section devoted to environmental cooperation is written in most details, it presents concrete challenges (e.g., air polluting emissions from the nickel production on the Cola peninsula) and proposes a list of cooperative multilateral efforts which are to be taken to address these challenges (e.g., expanded monitoring of ecology and radioactivity of the region). It is also stressed that environmental considerations should be integrated into all spheres of activity.

Barents Euro-Arctic 10 Year Anniversary Declaration 2003

At the Barents 10th Anniversary Summit in 2003 a new Declaration was adopted. It reaffirmed the overall aim of the Barents cooperation which is to provide stability and sustainable development in the Region.

Environmental concerns are mentioned among other areas of cooperation – overall security, economic development, human dimension and indigenous peoples' interests, which could contribute to achievement of this goal. Although environment is still given high priority in the Declaration and there are new concerns expressed, the overall language of the Declaration sounds to be more 'socially' oriented and there is a shift of attention from environmental concerns to social well-being, cross-border security and cultural identity. In general, a need to adopt a "balanced and integrated approach to economic development, social development and environmental protection" is admitted. New concerns are mentioned – the spread of tuberculosis, organized crime and

trafficking. Special attention is given to the necessity to take active actions to facilitate border-crossing, reinforce customs, border and immigration cooperation, as well as collaboration between rescue services. Moreover, such phenomenon as Barents “cultural identity” is mentioned for the first time:

We stress the need to strengthen the Barents cultural identity, with due respect to its historical traditions, and will encourage co-operation between cultural stakeholders. We are launching a process to shed new light on the history of the Barents Region (Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2003).

As for cooperation with external actors and organizations, the BEAC is stated to play an important role in “strengthening and further development of the Northern Dimension”¹⁵ and to be an “important framework for interaction with Canada, Japan and the United States in the high north of Europe”. In other words, actors frame the BEAC in the broader EU context as being a successful ‘conductor’ of some of its regional policies and a useful playground for discussing and negotiating on the international level ‘hot’ Arctic questions such as resources and trade routes.

As for perception of each other in the region, Russia is seen as a source of troubles and an *object* of policies directed by more developed countries:

...a multilateral response will be given to contamination, pollution, spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste problems affecting North West Russia (ibid.).

Although not stated directly, the spread of tuberculosis, organized crime and trafficking are also associated with Russia.

Kirkenes Declaration 2.0

On the 20th Anniversary of the Barents Summit a new declaration was adopted which was stamped as “Kirkenes Declaration 2.0”. 20th Barents Summit took place on 4-5 June, 2013 and was attended not only by Foreign Ministers but also by Prime-Ministers from Russia, Norway, Finland and Iceland which allows us to think that cooperation in the BEAC is given high political priority not only at the regional level where its actual implementation takes place, but internationally as well.

The new declaration was not intended to replace the one from 1993, but to supplement it (Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2013). Participants, thus, reaffirm their commitment to the principles of the Barents cooperation set out 20 years ago: contributing to stability and progress in the region and in Europe, promoting cooperation and partnership, contributing to international peace and security, protecting the rights of indigenous peoples.

¹⁵ The idea of Northern Dimension was launched by Finland in 1997 and further promoted during the country’s EU presidency in 1999. It used to be quite a broad political initiative but has transformed into a more solid entity embracing several EU financial instruments – the Tasis, Phare and INTERREG – directed towards former Eastern Block countries (Honneland and Stokke 2007, 5).

As for the achievements of the Barents cooperation, actors stress the important role of the BEAC in strengthening “mutual trust, stability and trust in Europe”. Interestingly, the bilateral agreement between the Russian Federation and the Kingdom of Norway on Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean of 15 September 2010 is mentioned as one of the greatest results of the Barents cooperation: it is “an illustration of the decisive role that trust can play in settling disputes and creating new opportunities for cooperation” (Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2013).

The image of the BEAC and its representation has changed substantially. The language describing the role of the region in international affairs is very strong and reassuring. It is said that the Barents region “used to be a periphery”, but is now “developing so fast that the demand for cooperation is greater today than ever”. Cooperation in the Barents region is reiterated to have a positive effect on Europe as a whole and to serve as “a model for European border dialogues and for sustainable development” (ibid.).

Regional level is admitted to be a “key element” of cooperation. According to the Declaration, *people* are the main actors of the Barents cooperation who have made major contribution to building trust and promoting peace, stability and progress.

As for spheres of cooperation, environment is put on the fifth position against the first one in the Kirkenes Declaration of 1993. Economy comes first and is followed by finance, people-to-people contacts and knowledge.

Actually, the first section titled as “Economy” is quite comprehensive and includes a broad range of issues – sustainable manner of resource use, well-being of people, information and know-how exchange, rights of indigenous peoples, development of infrastructure and transport corridors. This provides for continuity with the 10 years Anniversary Declaration which developed a threefold approach to cooperation balancing economy, environment and well-being. As stated in Kirkenes 2.0, any kind of economic activities, be it resource extraction, development of ports or marine terminals, should be “managed in a sustainable manner” and follow “the highest environmental standards”. Much of attention is given to the development of east-west transport networks. Actors express commitment to prepare a Joint Barents Transport Plan focusing on transport corridors between Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway. The Northern Sea Route is mentioned as a positive phenomenon which could “provide important business opportunities in all the Barents Euro-Arctic states” (ibid.).

Speaking about financing, parties support the existing project scheme mechanism as well as programmes funded jointly by the EU, Russia, Finland, Norway and Sweden, but at the same time

express a need to establish a fixed financial mechanism in the Barents region to support its project activities and “to facilitate making full use of the region’s investment potential” (ibid.). The BEAC should play a key role in this process.

People-to-people contacts and knowledge exchange are given high priority in the Declaration which mentions a lot of achievements in this sphere such as facilitation of border crossing, increase of tourism contacts, as well as successful development of educational and scientific collaboration across the borders. Parties commit themselves to the common goal of visa-free short-term travel for citizens and enhanced labour mobility in the region. Cooperation among NGOs and youth is also strongly supported.

As for environmental concerns, global climate change undoubtedly displaces concerns for pollution, radioactive waste and nuclear safety. Barents region is called to be “particularly sensitive” to global warming and thus adjustment to the impacts of climate change is the main challenge in the region. The words “nuclear”, “radioactive” and “pollution” are encountered only once in the text of the Declaration (ibid.).

Stokke et al. (2007, 83) claim that environmental concerns were more prominent during the formative years. This is the statement which could not be agreed on to a full extent. Environment as a key direction of cooperation on dealing with ecological problems present in the region has, undoubtedly, started to play a less prominent role. However, it would be wrong to claim that states have become less concerned with environmental issues. The attitude seems to have been adopted in recent years that environment is not a distinct field of cooperation but rather a necessary condition for any kind of cooperation, be it economy, trade, infrastructure, energy, resources, trade or tourism. Both speeches of the BEAC representatives as well as the text of the Kirkenes Declaration 2.0 emphasize that all activities are to be “managed in a sustainable manner” and follow “the highest environmental standards” (ibid.). On the other hand, one can’t fail to agree that practical questions of eliminating environmental ‘hot spots’ or dealing with the nuclear waste have been replaced by more global (and also more vague) concerns with the climate change and its consequences. It should be noticed that Russia does not seem to consider global warming as an important issue to address within the framework of the Barents cooperation.

5. BEAC IS WHAT STATES MAKE OF IT: THE IMPACT OF IDENTITIES AND NORMS ON COOPERATION

As reflected by his famous statement that “anarchy is what states make of it”, Wendt (1992, 399) implies that institutions are “fundamentally cognitive entities that do not exist apart from actors’ ideas about how the world works.” Thus, anarchy is just one of social constructs. The same logic could be applied to an international regime or an international organization.

The point of departure of the current thesis is that self-image and identity will shape norms and states’ interests, based on a notion that they operate in a social context of international relations. Identities, interests and norms are examined here as being ‘social constructs’ affected by shared ideas and embedded in a larger social culture of the cooperation within the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. Having this in mind, I will look at how states view themselves, relate to others and the region, and how this affects their interests and the Barents cooperation as a whole.

In order to do so I will analyze speeches of Prime Ministers or Foreign Ministers of Norway, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Denmark, as well as the EU representatives, all members of the BEAC. Availability of speeches delivered by high-profile politicians in relation to the involvement of their countries in the Barents cooperation at different times will allow making a historical comparison of how interests and identities of actors have changed for 20 years of cooperation.

5.1. Norway

Background information

From the very beginning Norway has been playing a prominent and the most active role in the Barents cooperation. The idea to establish a cooperative structure in the North of Europe to ‘conciliate’ the former Soviet Union and Nordic countries was introduced by then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway Thorvald Stoltenberg. The main purpose he had in mind was to create a framework for relations with a newly born Russia and to bring economic prosperity back to the northernmost border region of Norway so as people keep living and working so close to the border with the former Soviet Union. Relations with Russia have remained the key priority for Norway in the Barents Region.

Norwegian Barents Secretariat was established 11 months after the official signing of the Kirkenes Declaration to coordinate Norway’s first chairmanship in the BEAC but then prolonged its existence under the support of the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and is now mainly occupied with bilateral cooperation with Russia. Since the International Barents Secretariat was established in 2007, Norway has been providing the lion’s financial share to its annual budget, as

much as 2/3 of the overall members' contribution. At the regional level, Norway is presented by its northernmost counties – Finnmark, Nordland and Troms, and Sami indigenous peoples.

Identities

For Norway Barents Euro-Arctic Council is seen mainly as a platform or an instrument for promoting and maintaining good neighborly relations with Russia. As Atle Staalesen (2010, 16) puts it, “for Norway, the Barents cooperation plays the role of contact and cooperation stimulator in relations with Russia”. All achievements of the Barents cooperation which Jens Stoltenberg, the recent Prime-Minister of Norway and the son of Thorvald Stoltenberg who signed the original Kirkenes Declaration, mentioned in his speech at the 20 Years Anniversary Barents Summit, are connected with bilateral Russian-Norwegian Relations, e.g. introducing a visa-free regime for the northernmost cross-border territories and signing of the Agreement on Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean.

In general, Russia is mentioned not only in all speeches at the BEAC meetings but also in the statements to the Storting¹⁶ and mainly in positive terms, which proves the fact that a ‘friend’ role of Russia is important for constructing and promoting Norway’s own image in the region. Other Nordic states are mentioned only scarcely.

In his commissive speech act delivered at the conference held in Rovaniemi on 15-16 September 1997 “Barents Region today: Dreams and Realities”, Thorvald Stoltenberg (1997) attached quite a lot of attention to the NATO-Russian relations. Since Norway is a member of NATO, it is of crucial importance for the country to fulfill its commitments to the latter and at the same time keep friendly and trustful relations with Russia. Socializing Russia into Western norms and values was regarded as the major task to provide for stability and peace in the region and in Europe as a whole:

Integrating Russia into the democratic Europe is an important priority, both for Norway and the EU. Regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea area and the Barents Council is important in this regard. Norway is actively engaged in this cooperation (Bondevik 2003).

Gradually security has been replaced by trust and friendship, and the overall perception of Russia has changed – from a source of suspicions and environmental dangers to a partner to cooperate with. Establishing a visa-free travel regime with Russia has become the long-term goal for Norway as stated by the Norwegian State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Torgeir Larsen Larsen (2013). Within the framework of the Barents cooperation Norway always avoids using any of the Cold War labels and speaks of Russia exclusively in terms of partnership and good neighboring.

The overall vision of the region has changed dramatically. In the address at 13th Session of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council of 2011, Jonas Store stated:

¹⁶ Norwegian Parliament

A quiet revolution has led to a change of atmosphere in our region. Today the general picture is one of trust and confidence, friendship and close contacts. [...] Local and regional cross-border activities have provided a form of “soft security” and laid the foundation for mutual trust and confidence between good neighbours (Store 2011).

Jens Stoltenberg (2013) practically started his speech at the 20 years Anniversary of the Barents cooperation from the word *trust*: “A spirit of trust and cooperation has paved the way for concrete and historic results”.

As for participation of the international community in the work of the BEAC, Norway supports its active involvement in addressing environmental, namely, global warming issues facing the region. It also considers important to include countries outside the region to deal with political and economic challenges in the region (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011).

In general, the BEAC is seen as “a channel for discussing practical problems” (Godal 1995), “an arena for teamwork” (Store 2009), “a down-to-earth arena for regional cooperation” (Brende 2013).

As for the view of itself in the region, Norway claims to be an expert and a ‘leader’ in the North with the BEAC as an important tool in supporting this role. Store in his speech in Tromsø on 10 November 2005 in relation to Barents 2020 stated:

But we will also need new tools, and an overarching, coordinated approach which will be essential if Norway is to lead the way in the development of the north (as cited in Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2006).

Interests

Two overriding goals laid the foundation of the Barents cooperation in 1993: security and development. Both of them were given high priority by the Norwegian Government. Stoltenberg (1997) emphasized that the overall aim of cooperation in the region was “to contribute to peace and stability” which he mentioned as much as five times. Then Minister of Foreign Affairs Bjørn Tore Godal in his statement to the Storting on the Barents cooperation in 1995 mentioned security as the main strategic goal of the Barents cooperation. Security was seen as “a network of cooperation which will have a stabilizing effect on relations between the Nordic states and Russia” (Godal 1995). As for the second goal – development in the region – it was seen in a broad sense as promotion of progress in political, social, economic and environmental fields with an accent on sustainable utilization of natural resources and ecological considerations (ibid.).

Gradually, practical interests of cooperation replaced security concerns. Issues such as facilitating visa-crossing procedures, increasing the role of local authorities and involving indigenous peoples in the work of the BEAC at international and regional levels more actively have become prominent. In the “Future strategic priorities for the Barents cooperation” Larsen said:

The Barents cooperation represented a new approach to foreign policy. The primary aim shifted. An army-to-army perspective was replaced by a people-to-people one (Larsen 2013).

It should be mentioned that regional and people-to-people cooperation has always been seen important for Norway. In the statement to the Storting on the Barents cooperation of 1995, Godal (1995), said that “the Barents cooperation is primarily intended to serve the interests of those who live in the region”. Statement to the Storting on Foreign Policy of 2005 mentioned the Barents cooperation in which people-to-people contacts had been “particularly successful” (Peterson 2005). Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Store at the 12th Ministerial Session of the BEAC in 2009 made Barents regional cooperation the first point of his speech calling it “a success story” and he further added that

[a] strong friendship has been established between the 13 regional entities of the Barents region and a new regional identity has been created (Store 2009).

Opening of the Northern Sea route and increasing interest in resources in the North are mentioned only scarcely and are not seen to be prominent in the Norwegian policy in the Barents region, partly because these issues are addressed in the Arctic Council. However, when mentioned, international cooperation is highlighted to be important with the BEAC “playing a key role” in improving infrastructure and logistics (Store 2011).

All in all, as seen by Norway cross-border mobility, cooperation on education, environment, research and infrastructure are issues of utmost importance for the future Barents cooperation (Larsen 2013). In general, although given high priority (the highest among BEAC members), the Barents cooperation is viewed as a part of the broader Arctic and High North foreign policy in which Russia is taken into consideration quite seriously. As expressed in the “The High North. Visions and strategies”, High North is “Norway’s number one foreign policy priority” (Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2011). It is further stated that

[t]he Barents cooperation has become one of the mainstays of the formal regional cooperation in the north. Close ties between people in the North and northwest Russia have been an important supplement (ibid.).

Norms

As for norms and values important for Norway, cross-border cooperation, sustainable development and rights of indigenous peoples are brought to the fore in mostly commissive speech acts which represent the will to project these norms in relations with other members of cooperation. There are also references to the international law in the sphere of environment and global warming:

We should be looking ahead to the upcoming UN climate conference in Copenhagen, and send a strong message on the need for an ambitious global agreement – which is vital to the Barents region (Store 2009).

The principle of sovereignty is disregarded which implies that there is no fear or suspicion that sovereign rights of states and their territorial integrity could be violated by any of the actors in the region. It seems for Norway irrelevant to mention it in the context of the Barents cooperation. This proves one more time that Barents region is seen as a territory of ‘friends’ who demonstrate the rest of the world how disagreements could be resolved peacefully and based on international law.

Sustainable development is seen in the broadest sense and includes applying the highest environmental standards in all activities as well benefiting people – key stakeholders of cooperation. As for indigenous issues, Norway has always expressed strong dedication to grant more participatory rights to indigenous peoples and the need to preserve their traditional way of life.

The communicative language of Norwegian speeches could be described in strong normative terms. “We should”, “we need” or “we must” sentences in a context of referring to other members of the Barents cooperation prevail in all speeches analyzed in the current thesis, e.g.: “We feel and we felt that we should [...] do our best to contribute to peace and stability” (Stoltenberg 1997, 54); “We need to stimulate the generation of knowledge” (Larsen 2013); “We must continue open up borders” (Stoltenberg 2013).

Norwegian addresses at the Barents Summits could be framed as commissive speech acts. In almost all statements (mainly recent ones), politicians first mention achievements of the Barents cooperation which they make in highly positive terms and then proceed to describing commitments for future. Norway seems to feel responsible towards future generations and other actors for promoting sustainable development, stability and progress. In his commissive speech act Stoltenberg (1997, 55) expressed a view that “turning this [Barents] zone into a zone of peace and stability [...] will be of immense importance for future generations”. Store (2009) in his deliberative rhetoric underlined that “Norway is ready to support new indigenous projects and encouraged all of the partners “to do their part [in financing activities of Working Group on Indigenous Peoples]”. Larsen’s commissive speech act (2013) contained a readiness of the Norwegian government to “develop a joint transport plan for the whole region” and an expectation that more universities, such as Oulu University of Finland, would take part in cooperation. Thus, we could see that Norway does not only show readiness to take on responsibilities for the development in the region, but it also places expectations on other actors.

5.2. Russia

Background information

Russia is a full member of the BEAC. At the regional level it is represented by Arkhangelsk and Murmansk Oblast, the Republic of Karelia, Komi Republic and Nenets Autonomous Okrug, which

accounts for approximately 75% of the whole Barents territory and population. As for indigenous peoples, Sami, Nenets and Veps live on the territory of the region and participate in the Regional Barents Council. Russia does not have a permanent national Barents Secretariat.

After the collapse of the USSR, a newly born Russian Federation was searching for new ways of ‘rapprochement’ with the west both politically and economically. In this regard the Barents cooperation was seen as a ground for promoting trust in the region, which was during the Cold War the most closed one, and also as an opportunity to launch comprehensive economic cooperation between Nordic countries and Russia with a view to attract new investments and boost social and economic development of its northernmost regions.

Identities

The vision of the region from being a playground of the Cold War confrontation has changed to the space of mutual trust. Hence, the main goal of the Barents cooperation set in 1993 – establishing peace and security – has successfully been achieved:

Instead of mutual suspicion we have now developed culture of living together in an area that is perceived as a common home (Kozyrev 1997, 46).

Greatest achievement of the Barents cooperation over the years is respect, mutual trust and warm personal relations between people (Lavrov 2009).

We are all aware that the Euro-Arctic region is our common home (Medvedev 2013c).

The Council facilitates trust and a search for mutually acceptable solutions and ways of settling contradictions (Medvedev 2013a).

It should be mentioned that Russian politicians tend to use such terms as “Council” and “organization” in contrast to their Norwegian counterparts who prefer saying “the Barents cooperation” or “Barents region”. For example, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov calls the BEAC a “system-forming intergovernmental organization” which

has established itself firmly on the political map of Europe and gained a reputation as an organization that prefers, rather than loud declarative statements, concrete action for the benefit of the people living in the region (Lavrov 2009).

This could mean that Russia calls for more political attention to the international level of cooperation and more control from national capitals over regional activities, in contrast to Nordic countries, which generally (especially Norway and Sweden) promote regional and cross-border contacts. Underdeveloped small and medium sized business, which is constrained by legislative and institutional shortcomings, as well as the general trend of centralization of power, which results in imposing restrictions on local municipalities and regional authorities, explain the fact that international level is accentuated by Russia and is seen more important in its role structure.

In his interview to the Norwegian television company NRK Medvedev said that the Barents Euro-Arctic Region is one of state's priorities (Medvedev 2013d). Taking into consideration a vast geographical territory of Russia and a wide range of regional priorities of its foreign policy, the Barents cooperation is placed after Russian relations with the Commonwealth of Independent States, the EU, USA and NATO. However, Arctic (of which the Barents cooperation is seen to be a part) has recently been given much more serious attention. An evidence for this was the adoption in 2008 of the Arctic development strategy until 2020 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2013b) and the introduction of a separate paragraph devoted to the Arctic in the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation of 2013 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2013a) which was absent in its previous version of 2008.

In its latest document on Foreign Policy the Arctic Council and the BEAC are called to be organizational structures to support cooperation in Arctic (ibid.). Although priority is given to Arctic states, Russia does not exclude cooperation with non-Arctic states. However, there are concerns about expansion of 'outside' actors in the region. Such fear was expressed by Russian Prime-Minister Medvedev in his answers to journalists at a joint news conference of the heads of delegations of BEAC countries at the Barents Summit where he accentuated the prominent role of regional players in determining "the main parameters of regional cooperation, including the use of shelf" (Medvedev 2013b). In his replies at this conference which could be described more as directive speech acts with a tint of geopolitical realism, Prime Minister of Russia underlined that "regional countries should adopt key decisions [...] in line with the international law (ibid.).

In his response to a question about the recent Russian legislation concerning the activity of NGOs, Medvedev quite harshly stressed that this is an "internal affair of Russia" how to control NGOs which are legal entities according to the Russian legislation" (Medvedev 2013c). He added, "those structures which we create within our borders we have to have the right to control" (ibid.). In his response at the joint news conference with Jens Stoltenberg, he said:

[...] I believe that this [cooperation among NGOs and people-to-people contacts] is certainly an important issue, even though it is not a top priority in our relations and is unlikely to become one in future (Medvedev 2013c).

Thus, there is a tint of realism in making a clear distinction where international cooperation ends and national interests start. Although Russia reiterates that it views other Barents states exclusively as "partners" and "friends", statements like this diminish the actual level of trust across the line Russia-the rest of the BEAC members.

The positioning of itself has changed as well. Back in 1990s, Russia understood its economic and political backwardness and admitted that it needed technical and financial support. For instance, in

his speech in 1997 Kozyrev welcomed “any kind of support and cooperation, be it technical support or of course financial support” for improving energy consumption in Russian regions (Kozyrev 1997, 50).

In the commissive speech acts of Lavrov (2009) and Medvedev (2013a, 2013d), Russia is clearly presented as a full-fledged and equal partner ready to take on responsibilities. It also seems to be willing to promote a friendlier image of the Self:

Our aims in the Euro-Arctic Region are peaceful and pragmatic: we would like to use its potential for the benefit of our people and, of course, for that of people in neighbouring countries (Medvedev 2013d).

Interests

From the very beginning, Russia has been interested first of all in broad economic cooperation. For this reason, it has called for more political attention to the international level of the organization and has emphasized the importance of implementing large-scale economic projects in the region, which demands a permanent financial mechanism. The then Foreign Minister of Russia Andrey Kozyrev in his speech at the conference “Barents Region today: Dreams and Realities” in 1997 claimed that the major achievement of the Barents cooperation had been “the day-to-day basic cooperation” and the main shortcomings – those at the international level – “problems of financing big projects” (Kozyrev 1997, 45). In this regard, he welcomed “a more realistic approach” and more financial and political support from capitals (idem, 47).

The same idea was expressed 16 years later by the Prime Minister of Russia Dmitry Medvedev at the 20 Years Anniversary of the Barents cooperation in Kirkenes where he underlined that a financial instrument for infrastructure development in the region must be developed (Medvedev 2013a). Russia’s view of this funding mechanism is in a form of a public-private partnership with the involvement of governments and business people. However, Russia is opened to negotiating proposals made by other members such as establishing a fund or using European financial institutions. Medvedev emphasizes that without this instrument Barents partnership won’t be effective (Medvedev 2013a). Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov also stressed the necessity to introduce a “BEAC bank or fund to co-finance projects at state parties’ expense” (Lavrov 2009). Ultimately, Russia proposition was included in the text of the Kirkenes Declaration 2.0. However, its actual implementation remains to be a long-term perspective.

As for the cross-border cooperation, Russian politicians in their commissive speech acts continuously emphasizes the idea of introducing visa free travel zone in the whole Barents region (Medvedev 2013a) and ideally between Russia and the EU (Lavrov 2011). An important step in this direction was the abolition of visa regime for the trans-border territories of Murmansk oblast in Russia and the Finnmark province in Norway.

The Treaty on Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean signed in Murmansk by Foreign Ministers Jonas Gahr Støre and Sergei Lavrov in the presence of Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and President Dmitry Medvedev is also cited as a big achievement. According to Lavrov the treaty “makes it possible, on a firm basis of international law and good will, to tap the significant potential for expanding mutually beneficial economic cooperation” (Lavrov 2011). Medvedev also emphasizes that this decision has provided “a mutually beneficial structure” which removes from the agenda a very complex border question (Medvedev 2013c).

Development of transport infrastructure in the region is seen by Russia as a very important task. In this regard, Northern Sea route is given high priority. Lavrov (2011) stresses the fact that it gives the Barents region a “geopolitical” and “geoeconomic tinge” in facilitating access to resources and opening up of the shortest water route between Northern Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. Medvedev (2013a) accentuates its commercial importance. In his answers to journalists at a joint news conference of the heads of delegations of BEAC countries at the Barents Summit, Medvedev (2013b) emphasized that it is necessary not only to develop proper infrastructure and good conditions for its operation but also to draft proper legislation.

All in all, Russian view of the Barents cooperation could be described in terms of economic and commercial interests. In contrast to Norway and other Nordic states, which emphasize sustainable development and environmental protection, Russia seems to be more preoccupied with economic cooperation and commercial use of the resource potential of the region. Northern Sea Route plays a prominent part. Hopes are expressed for better and more ‘down-to-earth’ economic partnership supported by a fixed funding mechanism.

Although such issues as indigenous peoples and environmental concerns are mentioned, they do not seem to be prominent in the Russian foreign policy in the Barents region. Ecology and environment are stated as one of the most difficult issues of cooperation between Russia and Nordic countries (Medvedev 2013b).

Norms

As for norms and values important for Russia in the Barents Euro-Arctic region, it accentuates the observance of international law and the leading role of Barents and Arctic states in determining ‘rules of the game’ in the region (in contrast to out-side actors). Although interested more in increasing tangible commercial and economic positive effects of cooperation, Russia claims to adhere to the norms of sustainable development, protection of environment and indigenous peoples. The priority of the Russian Chairmanship was to ensure sustainable development in the Barents

region with emphasis on the socioeconomic factors closely tied with the observance of environmental requirements, as well as support of the indigenous peoples (Lavrov 2009). Development of the Arctic mineral wealth should take into account the interests and rights of the indigenous peoples of the North:

We welcome the development in BEAC of an Action Plan on Climate Change in the Barents Region, and the active participation in it of members of the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples (Lavrov 2011).

I believe Council should continue giving priority to the preservation of their [indigenous peoples] native environment, traditional way of life and cultural values (Medvedev 2013a).

Russia favors development of effective multilateral cooperation architecture in the region, which includes interaction with other Nordic international and regional organizations such as Arctic Council, Nordic Council of Ministers, Council of the Baltic States and Northern Dimension. (Lavrov 2009)

Speeches of the Russian representatives fall under perlocutionary speech acts with strong encouraging force. Speakers try to persuade, convince, and encourage other members to take efforts in the following directions: establishing a common financing mechanism (Lavrov 2009); abolishing visa regime between all BEAC countries and between Russia and the EU (Lavrov 2011); focusing on cooperation on specific projects and providing them with mechanisms of funding (Medvedev 2013a).

Apart from describing achievements of the Barents cooperation – such as establishing an atmosphere of trust and strengthening stability in the region – Russia also proposes a better view of the ‘Barents world’ with concrete steps to take in this direction such as introducing a permanent common mechanism of project financing. In this and other directions, Russia does not only expect a lot from its partners, it is ready to take on responsibilities. Hence, all speech acts could be described as commissives, which generate commitments and promises for the speaker:

We in Russia are thinking about how to help our participating regions with project financing (Lavrov 2009).

For its part, Russia will upgrade its coastal and port infrastructure and develop modern systems of monitoring, navigation and communications (Medvedev 2013a).

5.3. Finland

Background information

Back in 1990s Finland was one of the active promoters of the idea of establishing a cooperative structure in the Northern Europe. Since its prime concern was environment, in 1991 Finland proposed and produced the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) which was further incorporated in the Arctic Council. This was the first cooperative intergovernmental vehicle in the High North to deal with environmental monitoring and conservation.

In 1993 Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen was one of the representatives of seven nations to sign the Kirkenes Declaration. For Finland the Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation in its formative stages was an instrument of putting the Northern Dimension into an organizational framework and involving the EU more actively in it. Up to now, Northern Dimension is brought to the fore when speaking about the Barents cooperation and the EU is still seen as a very important actor in the BEAC.

At the regional level Finland is represented by Kainuu, Lapland and Oulu Region. North Karelia was granted an observer status in 2008. Speaking about indigenous peoples, Sami people live on the territory of the Finnish part of the Barents region. Finland has its own national Barents Secretariat which operates in Rovaniemi by the Regional Council of Lapland and coordinates activities of Lapland, Oulu and Kainuu provinces.

Identities

Since 1990s until the end of 2000s, the Northern Dimension seemed to play a prominent part in Finland's perception of the organizational framework of its relations with Russia and other countries in the Baltic Sea, Barents and Arctic regions. A highly commissive speech of the then Prime Minister of Finland Paavo Lipponen at the conference in Rovaniemi in 1997, which included strong deliberative rhetorics, was entirely devoted to the Northern Dimension (Lipponen 1997). Actually it was his speech which put the Northern Dimension on the EU's agenda (Vahl 2005, 52). The BEAC was perceived as "an effective instrument" in developing a more comprehensive Northern Dimension policy (Lipponen 1997, 33), as "an important medium for promoting the goals of Northern Dimension policies" (Tuomioja 2005).

Barents region was viewed exclusively as a territory for wider Arctic circumpolar policy. The BEAC was not given enough attention and was usually mentioned only alongside with other forums in the North of Europe – Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Nordic Council and Arctic Council. In his statement at the eighth meeting of the BEAC Blomberg devoted almost two third of his speech to the Arctic Council and mentioned the BEAC only as one of the bodies which could contribute to the implementation of circumpolar strategies (Blomberg 2001).

It was Finland which proposed to move to a two-year chairmanship and to convene at the ministerial level every other year instead of annually (Blomberg 2001). Back in 2005 Finland claimed it "a challenge" to assume BEAC chairmanship (Tuomioja 2005).

A speech of Stubb in 2009 (with evident characteristics of a highly encouraging perlocutionary speech act) indicated a change in the attitude to the BEAC and the role of Finland in the Barents region. In the speeches following the one made by Alexander Stubb in 2009, Finland seems to realize the importance of the Barents region and consequently the interest of Finland in the Barents

cooperation has grown. From now on achievements and priorities of the BEAC are spoken more in details and are brought to the fore in comparison with other cooperative structures in the region and the Northern Dimension in particular. Opening of the Northern Sea route, growing attention to resources and new possibilities for transport cooperation play a part here.

However while Norway accentuates regional level of the Barents cooperation, for Finland cooperation in the Barents is framed in an international or even global context:

The Barents framework should be seen [...] in a broader context, regionally, on the European level, and globally (Tuomioja 2005).

The Barents region is the part of the Arctic, which is closest to us and the region has an increasingly global reach (Tuomioja 2011).

As for the view of its own role in the region, Finland positions itself as an expert in relations between the EU and Russia. Its role of an expert in various fields such as tourism, off-shore industries, mining, clean technology and construction is clearly emphasized. In his deliberative rhetorics, Stubb (2009) highlights that although Finland cannot claim for natural resources in the region, it can provide know-how and logistics in developing new water ways and attracting new investments.

According to Staalesen (2012, 55), the stronger Finnish focus on the Barents Region (and Murmansk in particular) is part of the country's overall policy towards the Arctic. Finland is today not only seeking a role as connection between the EU and Russia, but is increasingly also becoming a key link between the EU and the Arctic (ibid.).

EU is seen as a very important actor in the Barents and in wider Arctic cooperation. Its interests should be safeguarded and taken into consideration. Developing the Northern Dimension was claimed to be "an important line of action in making the Union a more effective global actor" (Lipponen 1997). At the same time, Finland calls upon the EU for a more active role in promoting the Northern Dimension and in participating in the BEAC:

The safeguarding of arctic interests cannot be done with complete success without close and permanent cooperation with this influential global and European player (Blomberg 2001).

The Barents cooperation represents the regional voice and it is important that the voice is heard also in Brussels (Tuomioja 2013).

In its relations with Russia, Finland is more oriented on the Baltic Sea region. However, in a presentation of his country's new Arctic Strategy in June 2010, Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb outlined an enhanced Finnish focus on Murmansk Oblast (Stubb 2010). Stubb also argued that "Barents issues will get more attention in the EU Northern Dimension policy" and that "the development of the region during the next 10-15 years will be significant for Finland, Russia, Norway, and the EU".

Interests

Finnish choice to participate in the BEAC apart from the overall aim to strengthen stability and promote development in the region, was explained by its concern with environment, support by its shipping companies in the internationalization of the Northern Sea Route and last but not least by its interests in promoting the Northern Dimension policy. The prominence of the latter can be traced in all speeches by Finnish representatives studied in the current thesis.

According to Lipponen (1997) the following sectors should have been given priority within the framework of the Northern Dimension: trade and economic cooperation, developing infrastructure and telecommunications, facilitating border crossing, eliminating environmental hazards and bridging the social gap between Europe and applicant countries.

When calling for a more active involvement of the EU in the BEAC, Lipponen (1997, 34) in his commissive speech act stressed the importance of cooperating with Finland because “Finnish national interests are very much involved”. These were primarily interests in military security, economy and industry (idem, 33).

For years of cooperation military interests have been replaced by practical issues of collaboration:

It [regional policy] is the best security that you can have. If you get the regions closely integrated and working together for example in economic fields, it increases the security of the whole area (Stubb 2009).

Key priorities of the Barents cooperation for Finland in 2005-2007 were sustainable economic development, improving business opportunities, development of transport and telecommunication, improved accessibility across borders.

Stubb in his speech stressed the growing interest to natural resources and new water ways in the region caused by global warming. He accentuated that “the North in world politics right now is a true competitive advantage” (Stubb 2009).

Climate change and sustainable use of natural resources were stated as key issues by the Foreign Minister of Finland Erkki Tuomioja in his statement at the 13th BEAC Foreign Ministers Session (Tuomioja 2011). He underlined such priority spheres for Finland in the Barents cooperation as mining, development of business, transport routes and tourism.

Almost the same issues – global warming, increased demand for natural resources, the increase in the volume of mining in Finland and the necessity to work on the Barents transport plan – were brought to the fore by Jyrki Katainen at the 20 Years Anniversary of the Barents cooperation (Katainen 2013).

In 2013, Finland took on the chair of the BEAC after Norway. Environment and climate change are the key priorities (Tuomioja 2013). It is stated that Finland will pay special attention to economic

and business cooperation, sustainable mining and promotion of the use of clean technologies. Development of tourism plays an important role. Finland is also dedicated to make a comprehensive overview of the financial sources of the Barents cooperation with a view to establish a Barents Financing Mechanism (ibid.).

In general, at present Finland is expressing much more interest in the Barents region than it used to which is explained by “the global mega trends” such as global warming and increased demand for natural resources. Northern Sea route gives new economic opportunities and Finland is interested in applying its “own special knowledge” to provide for that all activities in the region are conducted in a sustainable manner with the use of highest environmental standards (Katainen 2013).

Norms

For Finland such principles as international environmental standards, sustainable development (see e.g. Lipponen 1997, Katainen 2013), good governance, gender equality, promotion of the interests of the indigenous peoples (Tuomioja 2005) have been of primary importance in its cooperation in the Barents region.

Finland calls for strong and cohesive international cooperation in the region involving all institutions in the North and attains a lot of importance to the Barents Secretariat owing to which the BEAC is becoming “much stronger institution” (Stubb 2009). The region is seen as the territory which units its members by common challenges and the importance of “working together” and “cooperating with each other” in finding common solutions to common challenges is emphasized:

I hope that we can all engage in close cooperation with each other and find a common approach to the transport and logistics challenges in the Barents region (Katainen 2013).

Finish politicians more than others call for closer cooperation between different institutions in the region and reiterate that “duplication should be avoided:

We are often dealing with the same issues in far too many ministerial and senior official level meetings (Blomberg 2001)

It is [...] important that this forum does not duplicate work already done elsewhere (Tuomioja 2005).

To maximize the effectiveness of the regional cooperation, synergy and coherence between different regional cooperation parties tackling similar issues such as Arctic Council, Council of Baltic States and Northern Dimension should be strengthened (Katainen 2013).

The important role of indigenous peoples is recognized by all Finnish politicians. They are called to be “natural partners” in the Barents cooperation who “enrich the economic activities” and “assure the environmental protection in the region” (Tuomioja 2011). Finland has recently made a financial contribution to the work of the Indigenous Peoples Working Group and is now seeking for more permanent solution to the financing of the Working Group (Tuomioja 2013).

The communicative language of Finnish speeches is of strong normative character. Often there are expressions encountered in speeches as “we should”, “we must/have to”, “the Council should”, “the Barents framework should be seen”, etc.

Finnish speeches also have encouraging force more commonly directed towards the EU:

The EU should assume a more active role in the Barents Council. [...] We also encourage the European Investment bank to consider financing programmes in Russia (Lipponen 1997, 33).

Finland will therefore encourage the Commission to seek closer ties with the Arctic Council (Blomberg 2001).

I also encourage the European Union and the Northern Dimension to keep working in the area (Stubb 2009).

As for commitments, Finland is ready to take on obligations although common work is emphasized:

[...] we can certainly provide knowledge and knowhow (Stubb 2009).

We give our full support to the Public-Private Partnership in the Barents tourism sector (Tuomioja 2011).

Finland is prepared to make a comprehensive overview of the financial sources of the Barents cooperation. We will set up an ad hoc working group to investigate the possibility to establish a Barents financing mechanism (Tuomioja 2013).

In general, Finland expects high level of cooperation and does not single out expectations from separate states. Cooperation and continuity seem to be guiding principles.

5.4. Sweden

Background information

Sweden is one of three Nordic countries which is at the same time a member of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and of the Barents region where it is represented by its Northern counties Norrbotten and Västerbotten. As for indigenous peoples, Sami people live on the territory of the Swedish part of the Barents region and are represented in the Barents Regional Council.

According to Huebert (2011, 212), Sweden as the Arctic state has been least engaged in matters of circumpolar Arctic issues, but has been active in other regional organizations, including the Nordic Council, the BEAC and the EU.

As for cooperation with Russia, while Sweden traditionally has looked towards the Baltic region, it now heightens its emphasis of the Barents region in the light of expanded shipping and mining, as well as growing demand for resources in the North and big upcoming industrial projects which have the potential to significantly influence regional economy and environment.

Identities

Sweden regards the Barents region as a strategically important region with its large and rich natural resources and precious natural environment (Belfrage 2007). Sweden is the last Arctic state to adopt

its Arctic strategy and it has traditionally participated more actively in the BEAC than in the Arctic Council in contrast to Finland.

In speeches delivered at early stages of the Barents cooperation there were fears of lack of ‘popularity’ of the Barents region outside its geographical area and the consequent need to “put the region more clearly on the European map” (Lindh 2001). “Promotion of the Barents region” was one of the priorities of the Swedish Chairmanship in 2001. This included making the activities of the BEAC more transparent and improving access to factual information on the region with the use of modern information technologies.

In the recent statements at the Barents sessions, however, there has been strong believe in the growing status of the Barents region which has come from the periphery to the forefront of the European affairs:

Today, the Barents Region is anything but peripheral. We find ourselves, almost to our own surprise, a hub of European trade and transport, energy extraction, mining and processing, forestry and fishery (Bildt 2011).

[...] the Barents region stands out as one of the most successful regional areas of cooperation in the north (Bildt 2013b).

Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Carl Bildt, who was highly involved when the BEAC was founded in 1993, in his deliberative rhetorics highlights the role of the Council in “strengthening mutual trust and stability in the region” (Bildt 2013b). He calls the Barents region “a zone of peace and stability” (Bildt 2013a, Bildt 2013b). The minister emphasizes that the primary goal set up 20 years ago – “to replace Cold War with Warm Cooperation” – has been successfully achieved (Bildt 2013a).

Swedish representatives have always highlighted the importance of regional level of the Barents cooperation, which means that regional actors – NGOs, business groups and individuals – “are in strong position to take action and provide ideas” (Uggla 1997, 57). It should be noticed that Sweden being a unitary state delegates extensive powers at the regional level and, thus, counties have quite autonomous and vast powers in conducting foreign policy. Minister for Foreign Affairs, Karl Bildt in his address to the Barents Council in 2009 agreed with his colleague Alexander Stubb that the Barents cooperation “is not foreign policy”, but rather “regional cooperation of practical nature” (Bildt 2009). In 2013 Bildt pointed out that regional level of the Barents cooperation “adds a bottom-up approach” to it (Bildt 2013b).

In general, Sweden presents itself as an integral part of the Barents region with a role of an ‘owner’ of expert knowledge and know-how. The region itself is presented as a “global spotlight” (Bildt 2013a) with increasingly growing role not only in Europe but on the global arena, with huge natural

resources potential on the one hand, and precious know-how in state-of-the-art technologies, on the other.

The case of Sweden shows that the BEAC can also serve as an important platform for discussing High North issues and can be “an alternative arena for political contacts between the Nordic countries, the EU and Russia” (Staalesen 2010, 129). Such a role appeared evident, when Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt in the light of the upcoming Swedish Chairmanship in BEAC used the Barents Council session in Murmansk in 2009 to soften relations with Russia (ibid.) after its offensive against Georgia in 2008.

Interests

Sweden’s primary interests in the Barents cooperation are those in the sphere of environment, natural resources, energy, cross-border and trade cooperation. Sweden is interested in promoting business opportunities for local companies, as well as developing transport corridors. Sweden has repeatedly emphasized the need to improve tax code and customs regulation (especially with regard to Russia) which will boost economic development in the region and increase business contacts.

Tourism potential of the High North is underlined (Bildt 2009). Forestry is an important economic activity in the Barents region from a Swedish point of view, and it should be managed in a sustainable manner, “applying some of the most environmentally friendly practices in the world” (Bildt 2011). Health and social issues, education and research, young people mobility are also given high attention.

As for environment, climate change and sustainable use of natural resources is highlighted:

Political decision-makers face the challenge to live up to our high ambitions on combating climate change and at the same time provide for sustainable use of our natural resources on commercially viable terms. [...] Sweden therefore welcomes the enhanced priority on climate change in our work and look forward to further initiatives (Belfrage 2007).

Energy cooperation needs to be enhanced including the use of renewable energy and improving energy efficiency (see e.g. Belfrage 2007, Bildt 2009). Cross-border cooperation should be promoted in the sphere of improving customs services, preventing organized crime and cooperation among emergency and rescue services (ibid.). Sweden also supports more active participation of regional authorities in economic cooperation which would increase opportunities for local businesses.

During its Chairmanship in 2009-2011 Sweden highlighted challenges of economic growth, sustainable use of natural resources, energy efficiency and climate change and a need to address these issues “in an integrated way”. Accent is placed on “eco-efficient” economy (Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2009).

Nowadays the accent is placed on “economic prosperity, environmental and social stability and common security”. Economic and natural resource potential is given utmost attention. The common responsibility is to ensure that “these resources contribute to the sustainable development of the Barents region” (Bildt 2013b).

Sweden welcomes more active participation of the EU in Barents affairs, including in the form of using its regional funds (Bildt 2013b). Sweden is therefore an active promoter of Barents issues in the EU and it stresses the importance of the region’s natural resources potential for Europe. In a seminar in Brussels in March 2011, Carl Bildt called the Barents region “immensely rich” in natural resources and “unique” in terms of its raw material assets. He also called for increased cooperation between the EU and the region and argued that huge natural resources contained in the EU could help meet European growing demand for raw materials (as cited in EurActiv 2011).

Norms

From a Swedish stance, international law, environmental and social sustainability, economic prosperity and common security are guiding principles which the Barents cooperation should be based on. Security is seen in its ‘soft’ form and a “human” factor is stressed:

[...] prosperity and sustainable development of the Barents region is our common security: from the transnational threat of infectious diseases, from natural and man-made disasters, and from environmental degradation (Bildt 2011).

Sweden highlights the role of the region as a ‘global center of excellence in technology and know-how for sustainable raw material extraction, harvesting and processing’ (Bildt 2011). In his speech at the 13th Session of the BEAC he argued:

[...] it is ultimately our world leading technology and know-how in sustainable extraction, processing and marketing that will allow those resources to contribute to development in the Barents Region (Bildt 2011).

Thus, knowledge and know-how in “world-leading technology” are the principal values which Sweden considers to play the most important role in the region. Their primary application should be to preserve the unique natural environment of the region. Environment and environmentally friendly practices including green economy and efficient energy use are the most prominent in Swedish speeches in comparison with those of other BEAC members.

From the start, Sweden has been an active promoter of strengthening international legal basis of the Barents cooperation which, according to Swedish politicians, will subsequently make regional cooperation more efficient and cross-border contacts easier and smoother. In her speech at the conference “Barents Region today: Dreams and Realities” Margaretha af Ugglas, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, emphasized the absence of legal framework which prevented economic and social progress and didn’t allow unlocking full potential of regional actors and

individual efforts (Ugglas 1997, 57). Sweden also calls for more effective coordination of activities with other regional bodies: “the link to the rest of the Arctic is increasingly important” (Bildt 2013b).

Indigenous issues take an important place in the Swedish vision of the Barents cooperation. Sweden appreciates the adoption of the UN declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the UN General Assembly in 2007. It also supports the indigenous peoples in the Council by the annual financial contributions.

Language of the Swedish speeches is increasingly normative. Sweden expects a lot from the Council and its members, and is at the same time ready to bring its own contribution to the region. In her commissive speech act, Ugglas (1997, 58) called for governments of member-states to “provide a legal framework” for cooperation. Bildt (2013a) in his deliberative rhetorics underlined that “to ensure that these [natural] riches contribute to the development of the Barents Region is “common responsibility” of all parties concerned.

5.5. Iceland

Background information

Due to its geographical location, Iceland has only limited interest in the Barents Region. It is a member of the BEAC, although it does not chair the Council and has no financial contribution to the IBS. In contrast, Iceland is an active member of the Arctic Council and shows its great interest in the Arctic region where it promotes itself mainly as a center for future trade routes taking into consideration the future possibilities given by the opening of the global Northern Sea Route which, according to the Iceland’s President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, “will [to some extent] replace the Suez Canal as a formidable linkage between Asia on the one hand and the U.S. and Europe on the other” (as cited in Miks 2013). Iceland welcomes participation of outside non-Arctic states and has actively supported the idea of granting an observer status in the Arctic Council to countries such as China.

Iceland is also an environment-conscious player with preservation of a vulnerable Arctic nature be one of its prime concerns. Since Iceland has no physical territories in the Barents region, the BEAC is seen as an additional forum to discuss Arctic issues, mainly what regards climate change and intensified marine traffic.

Identities

The speech of the President of Iceland Olafur Ragnar Grímsson (1997) who took part in the conference “Barents Region today: Dreams and Realities” was not completely free from thinking in

the Cold War era terms and could be classified as a forensic rhetorics according to Aristotle and an assertive speech act according to Onuf. After the end of the Cold war and at the dawn on the Barents cooperation, Russia was considered by Iceland an ‘outsider’ both in Europe and in the Barents Euro-Arctic region. However, socialization of the former Soviet Union into the European institutions was stated to play an important and useful part for strengthening stability and security not only in the region itself but also in the world as a whole:

The Barents-Arctic regions provide the Northern European countries with significant opportunities for co-operation, both among ourselves and with Russia (Grimsson 1997).

Grimson underlined that the “dramatic transformation of the political and economic landscape in Europe has brought the Barents and Arctic regions into a key position” and argued that it contributed to stability both in Europe and in trans-Atlantic relations (ibid.).

Iceland was the only member-state of the BEAC which back in 1990s pointed to the important role of the Barents cooperation not only in strengthening security in the region and in Europe, but also in contributing to improving international relations globally – between Russian and the USA. In Iceland’s point of view, the process of integration of the Euro-Arctic region can harmonize relationships “between large and small European states, between non-EU and EU members, and between non-NATO and NATO members” (Grimsson 1997).

In 1990s, Iceland sought to present itself in the light of strong Nordic affiliation, as a part of “we” among Nordic countries with a normative mission of bringing new practices to the Barents and Arctic regions (Grimsson 1997). Iceland and Finland were called to be members of the same “Nordic family”. Iceland was promoted as a county which could teach “important lessons for other communities in the region” and as a “laboratory where solutions can be examined and discussed” (ibid.).

In recent speeches, there has been no division between Nordic countries and Russia mentioned. Iceland presents itself as a part of an integrated Barents ‘family’. At the 20 Years Anniversary Barents Summit, Prime Minister of Iceland Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson in his assertive speech act stated:

[...] I have the feeling that we are all kinsmen today, although we may come from different tribes. We are an extended family of the Barents region working together to bring increased quality of life and more dynamic future to the region (Gunnlaugsson 2013).

Iceland’s perception of cooperation in the Barents region is the one of an increasingly global attitude. Indeed, the word ‘global’ seems to be one of the key ones in Icelandic speeches. On the contrary, regional level of cooperation plays only a scarce role and is mentioned superficially. Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation is stated to enhance the region’s contribution towards a better

understanding of such fundamental global problems as climate change and ozone depletion (Grimsson 1997).

Iceland is also an active promoter of a more prominent role and active involvement of the European Union in cooperation in the Barents and the Arctic regions which could deepen the understanding of actors from other parts of Europe of a wide-ranging and global character of issues addressed in the region (Grimsson 1997). Iceland also supports “strengthening of the region’s role within Europe” and believes that “sharing experience and mutually promoting the potential and interests of the North within Europe should be actively pursued” (Gunnarsson 2011).

Interests

Environmental cooperation has been Iceland’s main interest in the Barents region with an obvious focus on climate change and its consequences. The general impression after reading the speeches of the Icelandic official representatives, is that they strive to bring to notice that the Barents Euro-Arctic region is a ‘canary in a coal mine’ indicating how significant the changes in the global environment are and how far the outcomes of global warming could be not only for the region itself but for the whole Planet Earth. “The environmental significance of the entire Arctic region” is stated to be “critical for the Earth’s biosystem” (Grimsson 1997). The BEAC is seen as an effective and necessary forum to address these issues on an international level. The importance of global research and co-operation in dealing with the consequences of climate change and ozone depletion is underlined. It is not by chance that more than a page of the Grimsson’s speech at the conference “Barents Region today: Dreams and Realities” was devoted to presenting results of the scientific research done into climate change. The healthy condition of the marine environment is also a serious concern for Iceland. Both climate change and human activity such as oil extraction could be devastating for the ocean and its flora and fauna. Hence, although climate change is stated to be an important issue to be addressed by all members of the BEAC, Iceland seems to be the most concerned.

Environmental matters and combating climate change are issues central importance when we discuss the Arctic (Gunnarsson 2011).

Secondly, Iceland’s politicians underline increased marine traffic and intensified exploitation of natural resources, which result both from climate change and improved technologies. The Barents Region is claimed to be “at the center of these developments bringing forth new challenges as well as opportunities” (Asgeirsson 2009). As early as in 1997, Northern Sea Route was mentioned to “fundamentally transform opportunities for economic co-operation and trade with Asia” and to “place the Barents Euroarctic Region in a pivotal position in the global economy in the 21st century” (Grimsson 1997). The primary task of the BEAC in this regard is to “minimize the negative impact

of climate change, increased traffic and intensified exploitation of resources in the region on its inhabitants and the environment” (see e.g. Asgeirsson 2009, Gunnarsson 2011, Gunnlaugsson 2013). Iceland has been consistent in reiterating this goal for the BEAC.

Being a littoral island state, Iceland however does not have any territorial or resource claims in the Arctic. Its prime interests in the Barents cooperation could be summed up as those in combating climate change, developing marine infrastructure and minimizing the negative impact of the accelerated trade and economic activity in the region on its inhabitants.

Norms

The importance of international cooperation and international legal framework is stressed in all speeches. Language is normative in more idealistic terms. Responsibility to preserve the nature of the Arctic region is called a “moral obligation”.

The environmental significance of the entire Arctic region, and its links to the European, American and Asian continents, is so critical for the Earth’s biosystem as to make intensified co-operation between all states and regions in our part of the world both a moral duty and an obligation towards fellow members of the human race (Grimsson 1997).

Calls for legal institutionalization of cooperation – most importantly on environmental issues – are constantly made by Icelandic politicians. Thus, Iceland has consistently emphasized an urgent need to come to an international agreement on climate change (see e.g. Asgeirsson 2009, Gunnarsson 2011). The importance of the Agreement on Search and Rescue in the Arctic completed under the auspices of the Arctic Council has also been stressed. An agreement on Arctic marine oil pollution preparedness and response is also welcomed.

Iceland actively promotes international cooperation and welcomes participation of outside non-Arctic states. Iceland does not see the BEAC as an exclusive zone of those states, which geographically belong to it, and places Barents and Arctic regions in a global context.

Furthermore, Iceland stresses the importance of coordinating the activity of various cooperative structures in the region. “Increasing the cooperation and synergy between the regional bodies” is stated to be “mutually reinforcing” and improving the efficiency of their work (Gunnarsson 2011).

Although Iceland does not have any indigenous peoples represented in the BEAC, it however supports their indispensable role in the work of the Council. Iceland is the only member which has raised gender equality as an important issue to be considered in the work of the BEAC.

Icelandic speeches could be described as assertive speech acts, which inform the hearers about the global warming, and what consequences are likely to follow if they disregard this information. However, their statements do aim at producing an encouraging force for the audience – mainly to invite attention to the importance of international agreements in the sphere of environment. In case

of taking on commitments, they are presented as a common task for all members – in a way that “we must” do something – and are quite general in nature, e.g. “we must seek new opportunities and adapt to changes in a way that keeps us sustainable...” (Gunnlaugsson 2013). Thus, there could be a lack of will to recognize its own piece of responsibility in the BEAC.

5.6. Denmark

Background information

The same as Iceland, Denmark is not presented geographically in the Barents region and thus has a fairly limited interest in the Barents cooperation. It does not contribute to the IBS financially, nor does it rotate in chairing the Council. Denmark is an Arctic state due to its northern autonomous territory Greenland, sovereignty over which was recognized by the United Nations in 1916. Being a member of the Arctic Council and a signatory of UNCLOS¹⁷, it has a territorial claim to an extended continental shelf. Therefore, Denmark is actively involved in the Arctic affairs. The BEAC does not seem to play an important role in its foreign policy which is also indicated by the fact that Danish politicians usually mention their work in the Arctic Council at the Barents Summits. Global warming has by far had a positive impact on Greenland boosting its economic development and reducing its reliance on Denmark's funds.

Identities

In general, Denmark highly appreciates the work of the BEAC underlining that it has successfully contributed to promoting security and stability in the region which is proven by the increased number of border crossings as stated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark Villy Sovndal (2013). In his assertive speech act, he underlined that:

[t]he Barents cooperation has proven successful in achieving its all goal in strengthening stability and development in the region. [...] from being a region affected by Cold War barriers it has become a vibrant region of cooperation (ibid.).

However, while delivering speeches at the Barents meetings, Danish politicians tend to refer to Denmark's participation in the Arctic Council rather than speaking about the BEAC activity itself. Thus, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs Zilmer-Johns at the 12th BEAC meeting mentioned the Arctic Council's task force on Search and Rescue and underlined the fact that Denmark would host a ministerial meeting on this topic. At the next Barents Summit Zilmer-Johns in his forensic rhetorics took the opportunity to present the results of the Danish chairmanship of the Arctic Council. He also mentioned signing of the legally binding agreement on Search and Rescue operations in the Arctic and stressed that it made the Arctic Council to move from “a normative forum to a more binding regional cooperation” (Zilmer-Johns 2011). Minister of Foreign Affairs

¹⁷UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

Villy Sovndal at the 20th Anniversary BEAC meeting mentioned the Arctic Council in the light of welcoming new observer states (Sovndal 2013). From this, a conclusion could be drawn that Denmark does not attach much importance to its involvement in the BEAC and uses Barents Summits as an opportunity to talk about Arctic issues.

Denmark views Arctic as an ‘international venue’ where everyone has a right to be present and take part. Consequently, it promoted the inclusion of observer states to the Arctic Council such as China, Japan, India, Singapore, South Korea and Italy. For Denmark ensuring sustainable development in the region is both “a regional but also global responsibility” (Sovndal 2013).

Interests

Denmark’s prime interests, which explain its involvement in the Barents cooperation, have moved from security in its hard terms to a ‘soft security’ in a sense of upgrading well-being as well as social and environmental safety.

Denmark has already experienced outcomes of the global warming on itself – climate in Greenland has become warmer, a big portion of ice has melted away – and thus it is not by chance that climate change is brought to the fore by Danish politicians at the Barents meetings. Denmark’s main concern in this regard is how climate change could affect maritime environment and traditional lifestyles of peoples. For instance, it is stated that certain fish stocks disappear forcing local inhabitants to look for other sources of food and income (Zilmer-Johns 2009). Climate change could be equally a challenge and self-interest. “It can foster economic growth, create more jobs, increase and diversify our energy supplies” (ibid.). The Barents cooperation plays an important role in turning the effects of climate change to its advantage.

Cooperation on emergency preparedness and rescue operation is also given high priority. Agreement on Cooperation on Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response is called to be “a significant and welcome step forward creation a practical cooperation between all involved in order to improve security and safety of the people living in the region” (ibid.).

Norms

Denmark stresses the principle of “common but differentiated responsibility” which means that each actor in the Barents cooperation – be it state, indigenous people, or business – has its own share of responsibility and should bring “concrete measures aimed at improving the common future” (Zilmer-Johns 2009).

Language of Danish politicians could be described in normative terms with a cast of moral responsibility towards both people of the region and international community. Combating climate

change is stated to be “a common obligation and a common endeavour for all of us in the international community” (Zilmer-Johns 2009). Denmark emphasizes human dimension of the Barents cooperation which includes providing equal participatory rights of indigenous peoples.

As mentioned above, Danish interest in the BEAC is limited due to its geographical location which is also reflected in the language of Danish speeches. They could be classified as assertive speech acts which don't really have any encouraging force. They seem to be just a part of a formal fulfillment of Denmark's obligations as a member of the BEAC. There has been no commitment taken on. In general, they have a descriptive character of what have been achieved and what should be the priorities for future cooperation.

5.7. EU

Background information

The European Commission has the same membership status in the BEAC as member-states. When the Barents initiative was launched none of its states were members of the EU, but there was recognition that broader European participation would be helpful or even necessary for regional problem solving, given the dimensions of some of the trans-boundary issues involving northwest Russia (Stokke 1994). Actual EU involvement in BEAR remained low for many years, however the 1997 Finish initiative for developing a Northern Dimension of the EU was aimed at changing this situation (Heininen and Langley 1997).

Identities

Various regional councils in the North of Europe are called to “play the important role” of getting the EU and the region “closer and more interdependent”. The BEAC is one of these councils and it is viewed as “a highly relevant framework for its present and future contribution to Arctic cooperation” (see e.g. Herman 2011, Kallas 2013). Analysis of speeches shows that the EU seeks to promote an image of itself as a highly interested player in the Barents cooperation and a full-fledged member of the BEAC which is reflected in statements like, for example: “We, BEAC members, need to act urgently, together and with responsibility” (Kallas 2009), “We are interested in getting even more added value from BEAC” (Herman 2011).

Northern Dimension is presented as the main framework of the European policy in the Barents region with two Partnerships being given priority – Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership and Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics. Its growing interest of taking part in the Arctic affairs is its application for the permanent observer status in the Arctic Council which was however rejected mainly because BEAC members do not agree on the EU ban on hunting seals.

In this regard, it could be assumed that the EU's membership status in the BEAC will be given even higher priority in the near future.

The Barents region and the BEAC are seen as the Union's border area and an effective and fruitful ground for its relations with non-EU states like first of all Russia, as well as Norway and Iceland:

The Barents Region [...] is of special significance to the Union [...] as the Union's direct border area with its eastern neighbor, Russian Federation (Summa 1998, 65).

The North of Europe is where the inter-relation between the EU and Russia – along with Norway and Iceland – and between the regions themselves is smoother and particularly satisfactory (Kallas 2009).

Russia has been given prominent attention by the EU in the context of the Barents cooperation. The importance of the Barents region as a border zone between Europe and Russia is highlighted:

[...] the region offers exceptional opportunities to develop closer links between the European Union and the Russian Federation (Summa 1997, 65).

Necessity for coordinating activities and policies of different institutions dealing with the same issues in the North of Europe is underlined. In this regard, the Union stresses the importance of increasing “synergies” and avoiding duplications (Kallas 2010). The EU is stated to develop a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to Arctic-related regional cooperation (Herman 2011) and the BEAC is emphasized to be “a highly relevant” forum or framework for the EU contribution to the Arctic affairs (see e.g. Herman 2011, Kallas 2013).

Interests

In his speech “The Barents Region from the EU's point-of-view” at the conference “Barents Region today: Dreams and Realities” in 1997 Timo Summa presented an extensive overview of the European Commission's plans and actual implementation of its policy in the Barents region. It was highlighted that the EU highly appreciated and welcomed any kind of regional cooperation initiatives and that they could help “avoid the re-emergence of divisions” and to “promote stability, security and prosperity” (Summa 1997, 66). Commission's participation in the Barents cooperation was seen as “complementary” to the Union's bilateral relations with all the countries concerned and its role was emphasized to be exclusively “facilitating and supportive”. There were no programmes or financial instruments designed specifically for the Barents cooperation and the Commission used already existing ones – Tacis and Interreg, aimed mainly at Russia, and Objective 6 addressed the development of sparsely populated areas of Finland and Sweden.

Through Tacis programmes EU had its aim to facilitate trans-border crossing, develop training capacities for Russian private enterprises and public administrations, enhance transport network in the region including ports of Murmansk and Archangel, contribute to nuclear safety and support sustainable use of fish and forest resources. In 2007 Tacis was replaced by the European

Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument, 10 % of which were reserved for cross-border co-operation.

Northern Dimension which unites the EU, Norway, Iceland and Russia, produced fresh resources for regional projects and has aligned several pre-existing financial EU-instruments for capacity-building purposes in a geographical area corresponding both to the Barents and Baltic Sea regions (Honneland and Stokke 2007, 7). Later on however some observers noted a certain “scaling down” of the initiative (Joenniemi 1999). This was evident in the official documents from the EU on the Northern Dimension, one of which stated that “the Commission considers that neither new permanent structures nor new budget lines should be considered” (European Commission, 1999). As Vahl (2005, 52) pointed out, the ambitions concerning the Northern Dimension had been lowered and the resources the EU had been willing to put into the initiative were reduced.

In 2006, the Northern Dimension was ‘reloaded’ with a focus on Northwest Russia. According to some sources, an updated version of the Northern Dimension improved the EU-Russia relations. According to the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso,

[t]he transformation of the Northern Dimension into a common regional policy of the EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland represents a turning point in the history of this policy. From now on, it will be the joint responsibility of all the Northern Dimension Partners to make this policy successful and get the most of it for our citizens in Northern Europe. The Commission will play its full role in the implementation of this policy (European Union 2006).

At the third Ministerial meeting of the renewed Northern Dimension convened in Brussels on the 18th of February 2013, hosted by the European Union and chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, it was acknowledged that “the Baltic Sea and Barents regions have gained increasing importance on the policy agendas of the Northern Dimension partners” (European Union 2013). The Ministers noted that the key priority areas of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council coincide with areas of activity of all four Northern Dimension Partnerships¹⁸. They therefore encouraged close cooperation with the relevant bodies of the BEAC (*ibid.*) Participants further called for active measures in order to strengthen the interplay and synergies between the various actors in the Baltic Sea and Barents regions, encouraging, where appropriate, joint meetings (*ibid.*).

The stronger EU interest in the Barents Region is also reflected in its recently adopted documents on Arctic. While the European Commission’s Communication on the EU and the Arctic Region of 2008 (European Union 2008), exclusively highlighted challenges and opportunities in the Arctic, the similar document adopted in 2012 emphasized among other issues the Barents Region and the Barents cooperation (European Union 2012).

¹⁸ Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP); Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS); Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL); Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC)

This regional interest is also reflected in the European Parliament's report on the High North from 2011 (European Union 2011) which stresses the importance of developing new railway and transport corridors in the Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area (BEATA) and regards the Barents Euro-Arctic Council "as an important hub for cooperation between Denmark, Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the European Commission". A Finnish government representative, Jari Heiniluoma, believes that this is a good starting point for enhanced cooperation between the EU and the Barents region (as cited in EurActiv 2011).

In general, analysis of speeches of the European Commission representatives shows growing interest of the EU in the Barents region. As specified by Sim Kallas in his speech at the 20 Years Anniversary Barents Summit, between 2007 and 2013 the Union has invested 1.14 billion euros in the region's economic development. In his commissive speech act he underlined that stemming from its interest in a resource potential of the region which could meet the growing demand for raw materials in Europe, the EU is determined to promote its Raw Materials Initiative to foster sustainable supply from European sources¹⁹. Barents region is emphasized to have high potential for combining the use of energy and mineral resources (Herman 2011).

Promoting cross-border cooperation has always been high on the EU's agenda as regards its involvement in the Barents cooperation (see for example Kallas 2009, Herman 2011, Kallas 2013). The major instruments to support inter-regional cooperation and people-to-people contacts have been through such programmes as Kolarctic and Karelia-Russia.

The EU is interested in supporting the development of the regional infrastructure, in particular the East-West connection under the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics (Hermann 2011). The EU would also like to see the BEAC "more engaged in promoting cooperation in maritime issues" (ibid.).

Last but not least, protection of environment is a high priority for the EU in its participation in the BEAC. Combating climate change (Kallas 2009, Kallas 2013, Herman 2011, contributing to research and monitoring, providing safety of hydrocarbon exploitation and navigation (Herman 2011), nuclear safety (Kallas 2011), further work on eliminating 'hot spots' (Kallas 2013) remain overarching objectives of the EU. The Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership is called to have made a "ground-breaking progress" in this field (Hermann 2011).

Norms

Regarding cooperation in the North of Europe such principles as international governance, sustainable use of resources, determination to protect environment are in focus.

¹⁹ 88% of the EU's total output of iron ore is produced in the Barents Region (European Union 2012).

Indigenous issues are also given high priority. EU is presented as a strong promoter of indigenous peoples' rights and their traditional livelihood and supports that the BEAC "keeps providing an ever increasing role to its indigenous peoples" (Kallas 2009). It welcomes that all member-states of the BEAC ratify the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Kallas 2009) and is determined to provide support to civil society organizations working on indigenous peoples (Herman 2011).

Language of the EU representatives could be described in highly normative terms. There are references to international treaties which should govern the cooperation in certain fields (such as indigenous issues and environment) and which should be accepted by all members.

Cooperation in the Barents region is called to be successful and there is an obvious determination to make the role of the BEAC in the region even stronger. There are also evidences of the EU's interest in increasing its own role in the BEAC which is shown by the communicative language and namely by the readiness to take on commitments to make its own contribution to the development of the region:

The Union will continue to facilitate cross-border cooperation, people-to-people contacts and sustainable development in the next programming period (Kallas 2013)²⁰.

We are interested in getting even more added value from BEAC (Herman 2011).

5.8. Analytical Discussion

This section will include analysis of the findings on the Barents cooperation in relation to the theoretical background presented in Chapter 2. In this paragraph, I will study how constructivism explains for cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. I will elaborate on through which mechanisms norms are internationalized, to what extent they are shared by members of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and subsequently, what type of culture the Barents cooperation could be categorized into. This will enable to make a conclusion on to what extent the Barents cooperation could be considered 'socially constructed', i.e. affected by states' identities, which they define through communication, and by norms embedded in the system.

How states view BEAC and its role

Global megatrends such as opening of new sea routes and growing demand for natural resources, as well as increased understanding of the region's vulnerability to climate change and interdependent character of problems facing it, have strengthened the role of the BEAC as an organizational structure suitable to discuss common challenges and negotiate mutually acceptable solutions to the

²⁰ Northern Dimension is seen as a "key instrument" for promoting sustainable development, particularly what regards tackling its most polluted areas, the Barents "hot spots".

issues at stake. Although decisions of the BEAC do not have legally binding force, consensual character of decision-making process reflects the collective in-group identity and a teamwork of like-minded players. It should be underlined that the BEAC serves not only an important platform for discussing High North issues, but can also be “an alternative arena for political contacts between the Nordic countries, the EU and Russia” (Staalesen 2010, 129).

Despite the fact that the BEAC remains to be seen as no more than a ‘forum’ for intergovernmental and interregional cooperation, it has recently received more political and organizational weight since the establishment of the International Barents Secretariat in 2007 and the adoption of the legally binding agreement on search and rescue cooperation²¹. Talks on introducing a permanent financing mechanism, which could substitute or supplement the current mainly project-based funding scheme and the fact that this intention has been included in the Kirkenes Declaration 2.0 also speaks for increased political attention to the Council from its members.

The BEAC is not the only cooperation structure in the Northern Europe. There are also the Arctic Council and the Council of the Baltic Sea States tasks and competences of which could overlap. Although all state, especially Finland, call for avoiding duplications with other regional institutions, responsibilities do not seem to be perfectly ‘demarcated’. Thus, there is a danger of using the BEAC as a platform for discussing traditionally Arctic issues, and thereby disregarding practical issues of the Barents regional cooperation, such as well-being of people or eliminating environmental ‘hot spots’. For instance, Danish politicians tend to use Barents summits as a venue to talk about their country’s involvement in the Arctic Council. In contrast, Norway is very ‘focused’ on exclusively Barents cooperation with an accent on the role of people living in the region. Norwegian representatives mention Northern Sea Route only scarcely, which does not mean that they neglect the importance of it, but rather view cooperation on these issues under responsibility of other institutions such as the Arctic Council.

As mentioned in the introduction, BEAC is a unique institution in a sense that it has two layers of cooperation. BEAC members are not unanimous in positioning the BEAC in the regional vs international context. Some states, especially Denmark and Iceland who are not geographically present in the region, as well as Russia and Finland seem to place the BEAC more in an international or even global context, while others, first of all Norway and Sweden, are strong supporters of enhancing regional level of cooperation and delegating more powers to the regional and municipal level. This comes into collision with the Russian regional policy and the general

²¹ Agreement between the Governments in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region on Cooperation within the field of Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response developed between Finland, Norway, the Russian Federation and Sweden, was signed on 11 December 2008 in Moscow. The Agreement took effect on 17 May 2012 upon ratification by all Parties.

trend of strengthening federal powers which gives little prospect to believe that Russian regions will be given more independence in conducting foreign policy in the foreseen future.

How states view themselves, others and the region

Some states seem to have more identification with the region than do the others. Norway takes an integrated approach to its High North of which Barents region is a part, but where focus is mainly regional and with strong references to Russia which is seen as a key partner. Norway's identification with the BEAC is one of the strongest. It claims to be an expert and a 'leader' in the North and is confident to be treated in this way by others. The BEAC is presented as an important tool in promoting this role.

Russia's positioning of itself has changed. While in the formative stage of the Barents cooperation Russia understood its economic and political backwardness and admitted the need for technical and financial support, in the recent years it does not doubt to be taken by other members as a full-fledged and equal partner ready to take on responsibilities. The view of Russia by other members has also changed significantly. While at the beginning of the Barents cooperation it was partly seen as a 'source' of pollution and an 'object' of policy of more developed European countries and there was a clear will to socialize the former Soviet Union into the European values and norms, it is now related to as an exclusively equal partner and a rightful member of the group. There has been no division noticed in the speeches of recent years along the line 'Nordic family' versus Russia. There are also no fears or suspicions of violation by the latter of norms and rules of the Barents cooperation.

At the same time, Russia seems to be willing to receive a friendlier image in relations with other BEAC states, which could be interpreted as a move towards better inclusion and acceptance of Barents values, which are, by the way, mainly values of the Western culture. It does not mean that Russia does not have its own view on how to conduct foreign policy, but its behavior has become limited by the international norms embedded in the 'culture' of the Barents cooperation. By voluntarily accepting the norms (or at least claiming to do so), Russia automatically accepts some restrictions on its sovereignty in favor of common benefits from cooperation. This proves Keohane's assumption that leaders not driven by normative commitments will seek to mimic leaders who have internalized norms and thus benefit. States that internalize norms in their behavior still have interests, but their interests are endogenous to norms (Keohane 2009, 10).

New information about others changes these perceptions and states' interests and subsequently affects their behavior and choices for cooperation. Surprisingly, while the attitude towards Russia has shifted from distrust to confidence, as exemplified by statements of Nordic states, Russia itself

shows less trust in return. Although Russian politicians reiterate that they view all Barents members exclusively as “partners” and “friends”, there are statements which diminish the actual level of trust between Russia and the rest of the group. Consequently, this gives reasons to believe that Russia does not fully identify itself with the “Other”, and although there are some commonly shared international interests such as promotion of economic and social development in the region, protection of the traditional way of life of indigenous people, sustainable way of using natural resources, Russia has its own national interests which could be different from the ones of other actors in the region.

Finland and Sweden are confident to be recognized as full members of the Barents group but feel the need to better promote an image of “experts” possessing “special knowledge” in various spheres from mining to tourism and business. Finland is also eager to be treated as an expert in relations between the EU and Russia and the EU – Arctic.

The limited interests of Denmark in the Barents region, resting mainly on climate change, point to the fact that it has moderate cooperation interests in the region. It also indicates that Denmark is a state which has the least identification with the Barents region and that the region does not play a significant role in its self-image.

Interestingly, Iceland, which geographically is even further from the Barents region than Denmark, shows much more interest in cooperation and strives to be recognized by others as a member of the ‘Barents group’ while struggling to bring forth a more global attitude towards the BEAC which is more suitable for its self-image.

As for the EU, in the formative stage it highlighted its role in the Barents cooperation as “facilitating” and “supportive”, but has recently sought to actively promote an image of itself as a highly interested player in the BEAC. Finland (through the Northern Dimension) and Sweden are the most active supporters of Barents issues in the EU. In general, all states admit that the BEAC needs the EU and that its participation in the Barents cooperation should only grow.

The vision of the region itself has changed from being a playground of the Cold War confrontation to the space of peace, mutual trust and confidence. When the Barents cooperation was officially launched in 1993 all BEAC members were united in their goal to underpin security and stability in the region, to provide for peaceful coexistence in the North and avoid re-emergence of new division lines. This was the main interest, which all states sought to promote. However, for years of cooperation interests in the sphere of hard security have been replaced by what is known under the term “soft security”, including practical questions of cooperation on a wide range of issues. Military security is no longer a concern and all member-states acknowledge that the main goal, which was

set up more than 20 years ago, has been successfully achieved. The region has been freed from any of the suspicions of the Cold War era, which has been replaced by “Warm Cooperation” as stated by the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Carl Bildt (2013a). This is an idea, which shines through speeches of all BEAC representatives.

How interests of states have changed

As for spheres of cooperation, there has been a shift in priorities. Stemming from the analysis of official documents, environment was more prominent at the beginning of the Barents cooperation and was replaced by interests in promoting economic cooperation, people-to-people contacts, development of infrastructure and transport corridors, know-how and knowledge exchange. However, analysis of speeches indicates that there is no single view on what should be the priority for cooperation. There is a cluster of states for which environment is still the main concern. This includes Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Denmark, which seem to be most environmentally conscious members, although climate change and its consequences for peoples living in the region undoubtedly displace concerns for pollution, radioactive waste and nuclear safety. Norway is the most active promoter of cross-border cooperation and people-to-people contacts. The EU is a strong supporter of regional integration and cross-border cooperation, but is also driven by the economic interests in the resource potential of the region, new possibilities of industrial and shipping projects. Nevertheless, environment is still a high priority for all Nordic states and the EU. All of them state that environmentally high standards should be applied in all spheres of cooperation.

Climate change is an issue, which is the utmost concern for Iceland, but is also a prominent topic for all Nordic states. The EU views environment in a more traditional way attaining equal attention to global warming, eliminating ‘hot spots’, providing safety of nuclear stations as well as hydrocarbon exploitation. In contrast to them, Russia is less occupied with environment concerns and indigenous issues. Global warming does not seem to be a big issue for Russia at all. It seems to be more concerned with economic cooperation and commercial use of the resource potential and the Northern Sea Route.

How states relate to cooperation and which norms prevail

Although generally cooperation could be described in terms of friendship, some states have stronger ties and more evident ‘friendship’ relationship than do others. Norway places strong weight on the involvement of Russia in the cooperation, at the same time Russia does not give any of the western countries particular weight in its policy in the region.

Russia is the state which is most inclined to use a language which indicates restricted cooperation whereas the Nordic states and specially Iceland speaks in more depth about enhancing and

broadening the scope of cooperation to include outside non-Arctic states. Although not excluding completely non-Arctic states from the regional cooperation, Russia promotes the leading role of regional players in determining the main parameters of Barents and Arctic cooperation. It is clearly shown by Russia that certain issues are strictly under sovereign rights of national states and which could not be claimed by outside players.

According to Wendt constructivism in IR is based on two main assumptions: first that “structures of human associations are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces” and second, “identities and interests are socially constructed” which means that norms and ideals of state behavior are embedded in the system composed of states. These embedded ideals guide and direct the interaction of states (Wendt 1999, 1). As for norms which govern interaction of the BEAC members, cooperation and partnership, promoting peace and stability, observance of international law, providing for sustainable development, applying environmentally friendly attitude in all activities, protecting of the rights of indigenous peoples seem to be the most prominent and shared by all members, although to different extent. Adherence to international law is strongly encouraged by Iceland. The latter along with Sweden more often than others calls for strengthening of international legal basis of cooperation.

Sovereignty as a principle is not mentioned by any of the Nordic states or the EU, which is an indicator that they trust each other and do not feel to be threatened by any of the members of the group. Russia sometimes uses language, which could be described more in traditional realist than in idealist normative terms when it underlines the sovereign rights of regional countries in determining the main parameters of cooperation and demonstrates concerns about possible breach of ‘the rules of the game’ by outside non-Arctic actors. There are also certain spheres in which Russia is less ready to cooperate, such as the sector of NGO. In general, Russia seems to be more willing to place tougher control on what is going at the regional level.

What type of culture is cooperation in the BEAC

Since all states seem to be convinced that conflicts are to be resolved peacefully through international law, the Barents cooperation could be described as a Kantian culture of friendship. They present the region as “a success story” and “an example” of peaceful settlement of disputes. This is something which the rest of the world could learn from. Consequently, violence is condemned by all, which is expressed by stating that the region has become one of peace, confidence and stability. While there are differences in the level of identification with the group, in norms which are brought to the fore and also in the role of the BEAC in states’ foreign policies, describing the region as the one of friendship and trust is something which unites all participants of cooperation.

According to Wendt, at the third degree of Kantian culture internalization, states respect norms of cooperation because they see them as “an end in itself” and accept their claims as legitimate. All states, including Russia, show willingness to strengthen cooperation, which implies that it will subsequently limit sovereignty of individual national states in adhering to the value of cooperation for the sake of peace and stability. There is reason to suppose that their ‘Self’ identifies to some extent with the ‘Other’ and that international interests have become part of national interests. However, as we see, identification with the ‘Other’ is not total and although all BEAC members share common grounds in the Barents cooperation and thus could be considered as a “we”, some of them show this in stronger terms than do the others.

Constructivists stress the importance of intersubjectively shared meanings for both regime formation and regime performance. Continuation of ‘Barents friendship’ is maintained by shared knowledge of peaceful intentions and non-violent means of settling disputed. This knowledge is only about members within the group, which means that Barents actors may decide to act differently towards outsiders. An example could be the difference in how Russia relates to BEAC members and outside non-Arctic states. While it is more or less confident about peaceful intentions of the regional players and is ready to cooperate, when relating to the outside actors the language is in strong realist terms and there is a clear emphasis on the principle of sovereignty and clear distinction between ‘we’ as a group of BEAC members and the ‘other’. Another example could be signing of the delimitation treaty between Norway and Russia and the remaining territorial disputes of the latter with certain Baltic States – Estonia and Latvia.

The communicative language of all Nordic states and the EU could be described in strong normative terms, which means that they regard international interests of the Barents cooperation as if they were part of their own. Language is one of trust and confidence and actors do not doubt peaceful intentions of BEAC members as well as outside actors. In comparison with other participants, Russian framing of the Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation is more in realistic terms and the pronouncements of national interests and sovereign rights are if not prominent but still present.

Speeches of four members of the BEAC, which rotate in chairing the Council, as well as the EU could be categorized into commissive speech acts. None of them share willingness to stay out of cooperation. They are all determined to take on responsibilities and commit themselves to particular actions for the common benefit. Their speeches also have strong encouraging force in a sense that they place expectations on other members and expect a lot from cooperation.

Denmark is the country which identifies the least with the region and this is not a surprise that Danish statements at the Barents Summits could be classified as assertive speech acts with generally descriptive character and with little readiness to commit particular actions as a member of BEAC.

Interestingly, Iceland which has in BEAC the same status as Denmark – it does not chair the Council and is not represented at the regional level – shows much more interest in cooperation than does Denmark and has a high degree of identification with the group of Barents states promoting a more global vision of the BEAC and emphasizing its role as an expert on global warming.

Following Onuf's theorizing, commissive speech acts produce commitment-rules which agents are most likely to recognize in their behavior (Onuf 1998, 67). When these commitment-rules are most dominant, agents involve with other agents in "partnerships", or "associations" (Ibid.). In this sense, the Barents cooperation seems to be the one of "partnership" or an "association" where commitment-rules prevail.

According to Wendt, the deeper norms are internalized the more they play a part in affecting states' interests and their choices for cooperation. The level of 'social culture' depends on whether these norms are considered legitimate. Goodman and Jinks (2008) distinguish two different mechanisms for norms internalization: persuasion which is associated with coercion, and acculturation, which by contrast, refers to the process of voluntary accepting and taking on "beliefs and behavioral patterns of the surrounding culture" (idem, 726). Since speech acts of most BEAC members (except for Denmark and Iceland which nevertheless do not show any disagreement or the signs of being coerced into a particular behavior) have been classified as commitment rules, it is possible to suppose that norms are internalized through acculturation and are voluntary taken on, which contributes to the forming of the common social Kantian culture.

Norms may influence communication between states in different ways. According to Keohane, they may serve as road maps, focal points or institutions. The fact that there is a set of 'shared understandings' among BEAC members allows us to think that norms of the Barents cooperation could be seen as focal points. They help states define acceptable solutions to collective action problems generating what is called by Haas a group thinking (Haas 1992, 3). Once ideas have become generally accepted by all members of the group and considered legitimate, they are embodied in an institutional framework. However, no Kirkenes Declaration 1993, neither Kirkenes Declaration 2.0 has a legally binding character. There are only two agreements which have legally binding force – on rescue cooperation and on the establishment of the IBS. The lack of formal legal framework prevents us from categorizing the BEAC into an international organization in a full sense and cooperation into the highest level of 'social construction' – legitimacy – according to Wendt. While there are common values, principles and norms, including a consensual principle of decision-making, rules is something which the Barents cooperation lacks.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

According to Wendt (1999, 20), the character of international life is determined by the beliefs and expectations that states have about each other and these are constructed largely by social rather than material structures. In other words, the world is what we think about it.

The point of departure of the current thesis is that identities and norms will shape states' interests based on a notion that they operate in a social context of the Barents cooperation. In other words, if the hypothesis is supported that there is a certain degree of identification with the group and there are some shared norms embedded in the system which members of the group consider legitimate and project in their international encounters, i.e. in the Barents cooperation, it proves a constructivist viewpoint that states do not have "a portfolio of interests that they carry around independent of social context" (Hopf 1998, 172), but rather define them in the process of communication with other actors. It is not only economic benefits or geopolitical gains which determine states' choices for cooperation but also the way they identify with the group and how they perceive the others.

There are definitely common norms and values which lay the foundation of the Barents cooperation such as cooperation and partnership, promoting peace and stability, observance of international law, providing for sustainable development, environment protection, respect for the rights of indigenous peoples. While in the formative stages of the Barents cooperation a subtle linkage was drawn between the realization of broader economic cooperation desired by Russia and progress in environmental area which has been a Nordic priority (Stokke 1994), nowadays, more solidarity has been achieved. Europe seems to wake up to the Russian expectations on strengthening broad-scaled economic cooperation and bringing about a stable financial basis for it. Russia, in its turn, seeks to promote a friendlier image of itself showing willingness to accede to Western values and principles.

None of the states express the will to stay out of cooperation. Sovereignty as a principle is not prominent and does not seem to be the guiding norm for cooperation which means that actors have acquired 'shared understanding' on the content of the issues at stake and on the means to address them, as well as 'shared knowledge' of peaceful intentions of other members of the group through the process of communication with each other. Subsequently, cooperation under the Barents Euro-Arctic Council can be put into the context of the Kantian friendship culture in which identities and shared norms influence states' interests and affect cooperation.

Nevertheless, it cannot be disregarded that some actors show more identification with the region than do the others. Denmark stays out of the common social culture since it shows limited interest in the region and the BEAC does not seem to play any important role in its self-image. All other

Nordic states including Iceland have recently shown a growing attention to the Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation and the Barents region plays a big part in determining their self-image. The EU strives for better inclusion with a focus on environment, infrastructure and regional integration. It also has economic interests in the resource potential of the region in the light of the growing demand for energy in Europe. Russia is confident that its voice is heard by other members of cooperation and feels free to have its own stance on particular issues such as the sphere of NGOs, economic cooperation or financing. At the same time it shows a strong will to ‘play’ in accordance with the commonly accepted rules and norms. Although the general vision of the region has changed from a playground of confrontation to a space of stability and peaceful co-existence, there is still some mistrust left on the traditional borderline Europe-Russia, surprisingly, mainly from the latter.

Furthermore, while the decision making procedure has a consensual character which reflects the “in-group identity” and the determination to find commonly accepted solutions to the issues at stake, none of the decisions of the BEAC bear legally binding force. Participants of cooperation have also failed to confer a legally binding character to the Kirkenes declaration and are unlikely to agree to do so in the foreseen future. However, the agreement on rescue operation shows that in certain fields which don’t touch ‘hard core’ issues such as security or foreign trade, states are ready to go further towards strengthening international legal framework of the Barents cooperation. Delimitation treaty between Russia and Norway as well as introducing a visa-free regime between its northern cross-border regions show that the solidarity is growing across the Europe-Russia borderline not only as presented in declarations and speeches but also in practice.

The general conclusion is that the Barents cooperation is a Kantian friendship culture in which norms and identities affect states’ behavior. The extent to which international norms have become part of their national interests is a questionable issue and is quite loose to define. It is evident that it would be too idealistic to think that BEAC members have developed a culture in which “the cognitive boundaries of the Self are extended to include the Other” and that “Self and Other form a single “cognitive region” (Wendt 1999, 305). The culture of the Barents cooperation could be placed in between the second and the third degree of norms internalization according to Wendt. This means that there is a set of common norms, which states take on voluntarily and a certain degree of identification with the region, but at the same time particular national interests stay intact.

The last remark is that in the current thesis the international level of the Barents cooperation has been addressed with only superficial references to the regional layer. In this regard, it is suggested that further deeper research could be made into the regional and cross-border cooperation to see to what extent representatives of counties, as well as people – key stakeholders of the Barents cooperation – identify themselves with the region and share common norms and values.

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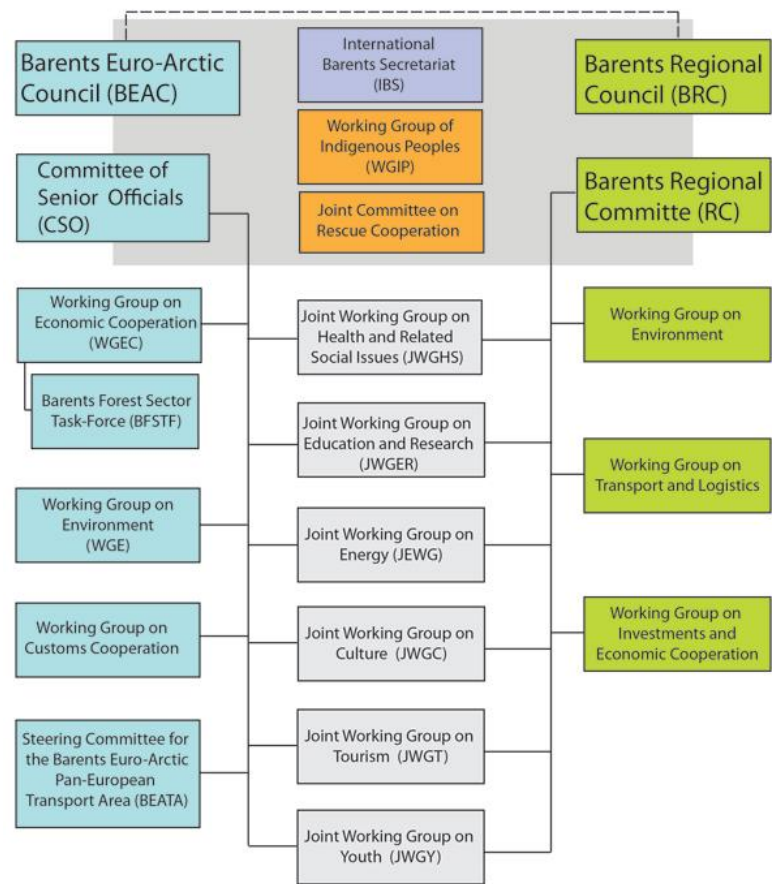
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Appendix 1

Organization chart of the Barents cooperation



Source: Barents Euro-Arctic Council. Available at: <<http://www.BEAC.st/in-English/Barents-Euro-Arctic-Council/Introduction/Organisational-chart>>, retrieved 12.04. 2014